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Honoré de Balzac

LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE

The Human Comedy

PHILOSOPHIC AND ANALYTIC STUDIES

VOLUME IV

Pierre VIDAL

DEATH OF ETIENNE AND GABRIELLE

These words discharged into the hearts of the two children the terror with which they were laden. As Etienne saw his father's great hand, armed with a sword, raised over Gabrielle's head, he died, and Gabrielle fell dead while trying to retain him.

The *Edition Définitive* of the *Comédie Humaine* by HONORÉ DE BALZAC, now for the first time completely translated into English.

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GAMBARA. MASSIMILLA DONI. THE ACCURSED CHILD. IN ONE VOLUME. TRANSLATED BY THOS. H. WALLS AND GEORGE BURNHAM IVES, AND ILLUSTRATED WITH FOUR ETCHINGS.

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GAMBARA

TO MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS DE BELLOY

It was by the fireside, in a mysterious, splendid retreat which no longer exists, but which will live in our memory, and whence our eyes discovered Paris, from the hills of Bellevue to those of Belleville, from Montmartre to the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, on a morning bedewed with tea, and amid the thousand thoughts that arise and die out like rockets in your sparkling conversation, that you, prodigal of wit, threw under my pen that personage worthy of Hoffman, that bearer of unknown treasures, that pilgrim seated at the gate of Paradise, having ears to listen to the songs of the angels, and having no longer a tongue to repeat them, touching ivory keys with fingers bruised by the contractions of divine inspiration, and believing that he was expressing the music of Heaven to a bewildered audience. You have created GAMBARA, I have only clothed him. Let me render unto Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, regretting that you did not seize the pen at an epoch when noblemen ought to use it as well as their sword, in order to save their country. You may be forgetful of self, but you owe your talents to us.

*

New-Year's Day of 1831 was emptying its cornucopias of sugar-plums, four o'clock was striking, crowds were gathering in the Palais Royal, and the restaurants were rapidly filling up. A carriage at this moment drew up before the steps, a young man of proud mien alighted therefrom, evidently a foreigner, for otherwise he would have had neither the outrider with the aristocratic plumes, nor the armorial bearings still sought after by the heroes of July.

The stranger entered the Palais Royal, and followed the crowd through the galleries, without surprise at the slow progress to which he was condemned by the concourse of the curious; he seemed accustomed to the noble gait which has been ironically termed "the ambassador's step;" but his dignity smacked a little of the theatre. Although his face was grave and handsome, his hat, whence escaped a cluster of black curls, inclined rather too much over the right ear, contradicting his gravity and giving to the wearer a certain sinister air. His distracted and half-closed eyes glanced disdainfully upon the crowd.

"There is a very handsome young man," exclaimed a grisette, stepping aside to allow him to pass.

"And he knows it too well!" loudly replied her companion, who was herself ugly.

After a walk through the gallery, the young man looked alternately at the sky and at his watch, and, with a gesture of impatience, entered a smoking apartment, lighted a cigar, and, taking his position before a mirror, glanced at his costume, whose richness exceeded rather what is permitted in France by the laws of good taste. He rearranged his collar and black velvet vest, which was traversed, in several directions, by one of those massive gold chains which are manufactured at Genoa; then, having thrown, by a single movement, his velvet-lined cloak over his left shoulder, disposing it with grace, he resumed his walk, not at all disconcerted by the bourgeois glances that he encountered. As soon as the shops began to be lighted, and the night to appear sufficiently dark, he bent his steps toward the Place du Palais Royal, like a man who feared to be recognized; for he kept by the side of the enclosure as far as the fountain, in order to reach, under shelter of the hackney-coaches, the entrance of Rue Froidmanteau, an obscure, dirty, and low thoroughfare, a sort of sewer, which the police tolerate, near the salubrious Palais Royal, just as an Italian major-domo would allow a negligent valet to heap, in a corner of the staircase, the sweepings of the apartment.

The young man hesitated, reminding one of a young bourgeoise in Sunday attire, stretching out her neck before a stream swollen by a shower. The

hour, however, was well chosen for satisfying any shameful fancy. Earlier, there was a danger of surprise; later, a risk of being preceded. To be invited by a glance which encourages without provocation, to have followed for an hour, perhaps for a day, a young and beautiful woman, to have divined her thoughts, and to have put a thousand favorable interpretations upon her frivolity, to have recovered faith in sudden and irresistible sympathy, to have imagined, beneath the fire of transient emotion, an adventure in an age in which romances are written for the sole reason that they no longer occur, to have dreamed of balconies, guitars, stratagems, bolts, and to be draped with the mantle of Almaviva, after having in his rhapsody written a poem, to stop at the door of a disreputable house; and then, for the whole dénouement, to perceive in the reserve of his Rosine a precaution imposed by a police regulation,—is it not a deception through which many men have passed who are unwilling to acknowledge it?

The most natural sentiments are those which we confess with the greatest repugnance, and conceit is one of them. When the lesson ends here, the Parisian either profits by it or forgets it, and the evil is not serious; but it was not to be thus with the stranger, who began to fear that his Parisian education might cost him dear.

This pedestrian was a noble Milanese, banished from his country, where certain liberal freaks had rendered him a suspect to the Austrian government.

Comte Andrea Marcosini was received in Paris

with that welcome, truly French in eagerness, which an amiable disposition, joined to a sounding title, a handsome exterior, and two hundred thousand francs a year, is sure to command there. For such a man, exile is a pleasure-jaunt; his property was merely sequestered, and he was informed by his friends, that, after an absence of two years at most, he might safely return to his own country. Having written a dozen sonnets in which "*crudeli affanni*" was made to rhyme with "*i miei tiranni*," and, from his own purse, maintained the unfortunate Italian refugees, Comte Andrea, who had the misfortune to be a poet, believed himself released from his patriotic ideas. Since his arrival, then, he had given himself up without reserve to the pleasures of all kinds which Paris offers gratuitously to all who are rich enough to purchase them. His talents and beauty had gained him much success among women, whom he loved collectively, as became his age, but among whom he had not yet distinguished anyone. Moreover, that taste in him was subordinated to those for music and poetry, which he had cultivated from childhood, and in which it appeared to him more difficult and more glorious to succeed than in gallantry, since nature had spared him the difficulties which men love to surmount.

A complex man, like so many others, he was easily seduced by the allurements of luxury, without which he could not have lived, and he adhered tenaciously to the social distinctions which his opinions rejected. His theories of artist, thinker, poet, were

frequently in contradiction with his tastes, with his feelings, with his habits of a millionaire gentleman. But he consoled himself with respect to these absurdities, recognizing them in many Parisians, liberal by interest, aristocratic by nature. It was, then, not without a strange uneasiness that he caught himself, on December 31, 1830, on foot in the midst of a Parisian thaw, tracking the steps of a woman whose costume proclaimed profound, radical, ancient, confirmed misery, who was not more beautiful than so many others whom he saw every evening at the Bouffons, at the Opéra, in society, and certainly not so young as Madame de Manerville, with whom he had made an appointment for that very day, and who, perhaps, was still awaiting him. But there was in the glance, at once wild and tender, deep and rapid, which the black eyes of this woman stealthily darted at him, so much sorrow, and so much smothered delight! She had blushed with so much fire, when, upon leaving the shop in which she had remained a quarter of an hour, her eyes had so luckily met those of the Milanese, who had awaited her within a few steps! Finally, there were so many buts and ifs, that the count, attacked by one of those furious temptations for which there is no name in any language, not even in that of the orgy, gave himself up to the pursuit of this woman, hunting *la grisette* like an old Parisian. Pursuing his way, whether following or preceding this woman, he scanned her in all the details of person and dress, in order to dislodge the absurd, insane desire which

had entrenched itself in his brain; soon he found a pleasure in this review, more ardent than that which he had tasted the preceding evening in contemplating, beneath the waves of a perfumed bath, the irreproachable outlines of a beloved person; sometimes, lowering her head, the unknown one threw upon him the side-glance of a goat tied close to the ground, and, finding herself continually pursued, she quickened her step as if she wished to escape. Yet, whenever a block of vehicles or any other accident brought Andrea near her, the nobleman perceived her lower her face beneath his glance, without any expression of vexation in her features. These sure signs of struggling emotion gave the final spur to the disordered dreams that were running away with him; and he galloped as far as Rue Froidmanteau, into which, after numerous turns, the unknown one suddenly entered, believing that she had concealed her track from the stranger, who was much surprised at her movements.

It was night. Two women, tattooed with rouge, who were drinking black-currant ratafee upon the counter of a grocer, saw the young woman and called her. The unknown one stopped upon the threshold of the door, replied in a few words, affably expressed, to the cordial compliment which was addressed to her, and resumed her journey. Andrea, who followed her, saw her disappear in one of the darkest alleys of that street, whose name was unknown to him. The repulsive aspect of the house into which the heroine of his romance had just entered caused him a feeling

of nausea. Retreating a step to examine the locality, he found close to him a man of forbidding features, whom he asked for information. The man supported his right hand upon a knotty stick, placed his left hand upon his hip, and replied, in a single word:

"Jester!"

But quizzing the Italian, upon whom the light of a street-lamp fell, his countenance assumed a wheedling expression.

"Ah! beg pardon, monsieur," he continued in an entirely changed tone, "there is also a restaurant, a sort of table-d'hôte, where the cooking is wretched, and where they put cheese in the soup. Perhaps the gentleman is looking for that cook-shop, for it's easy to see by his costume that the gentleman is an Italian; the Italians are very fond of velvet and cheese. If the gentleman wishes I should direct him to a better restaurant, I have an aunt a few steps from here, who is very partial to foreigners."

Andrea raised his cloak up to his moustache, and darted out of the street, impelled by the disgust which this impure individual caused him, whose dress and gestures were in keeping with the low house into which the unknown one had just entered. He returned with delight to the thousand refinements of his apartment, and went to pass the evening with the Marquise d'Espard in order to endeavor to wash out the stain of that fancy which had ruled him so tyrannically during a part of the day. After retiring to rest, however, in the meditation of night, his day-dream returned, but clearer and more vivid than the

reality. Again the unknown one passed before him, occasionally in crossing the gutters she again revealed the shapely leg. Her hips quivered nervously at each of her steps. Andrea desired to speak to her again and dared not, he, Marcosini, a noble Milanese! Then he saw her entering this obscure alley, which had deprived him of her, and he reproached himself for not having followed her.

"For, finally," he said to himself, "if she were avoiding me and wishing me to lose trace of her, she loves me. With women of this sort resistance is a proof of love. Had I pushed this adventure further, I should have finished, perhaps, in a feeling of disgust, and I should sleep quietly."

The count was in the habit of analyzing his most ardent feelings, as men involuntarily do who have as much intellect as heart, and he was astonished to behold again the unknown one of Rue Froidmanteau, not in the ideal pomp of visions, but in the bareness of her afflicting realities. And yet, if his fancy had stripped this woman of the garb of misery, it would have spoiled her for him; for he wished her, he desired her, he loved her with her soiled stockings, with her worn shoes, with her rice-straw hat. He wished for her even in that house into which he had seen her enter.

"Am I captured, then, by vice?" he asked himself in alarm. "I am not yet so far gone, I am twenty-three years of age, and have nothing of the blasé old man."

Even the energy of caprice, of which he felt

himself the sport, somewhat reassured him. This singular struggle, this reflection, and this love on the wing will justly surprise some persons accustomed to the ways of Paris; but they must observe that the Comte Andrea Marcosini was not a Frenchman.

Brought up by two abbés, who, according to the instructions given by a devout father, seldom released him, Andrea had not fallen in love with a cousin at eleven years of age, nor had he at twelve betrayed his mother's chambermaid; he had not frequented those colleges in which the most perfect instruction is not that which the State sells. Finally, he had dwelt in Paris but a few years; he was, therefore, still accessible to those sudden and deep impressions against which French education and manners form so powerful a shield. In Southern countries, great passions frequently arise at a glance. A Gascon gentleman, who tempered much sensibility with much reflection, and possessed himself of a thousand little receipts against sudden apoplexies of his mind and heart, had advised the count to surrender himself at least once a month to some magistral orgy, to charm away those storms of the soul which, without such precautions, sometimes burst inopportunely. Andrea remembered the advice.

"Well," thought he, "I will begin to-morrow, the first of January."

This explained why Comte Andrea Marcosini manœuvred so timidly in entering Rue Froidmanteau. The elegant man embarrassed the lover; he

hesitated a long while, but, having made a last appeal to his courage, the lover walked with a sufficiently firm step to the house, which he recognized without difficulty. There he paused again. Was this woman really what he imagined? Was he not on the point of taking some false step? Then he recalled the Italian table-d'hôte, and hurried to seize upon a middle course which should serve at once his desire and his reluctance. He entered for dinner, and glided into the alley, at the end of which he found, not without groping a long while, the damp and greasy steps of a staircase which a great Italian seigneur was to take for a ladder. Attracted toward the first story by a small lamp placed upon the floor, and by a strong kitchen odor, he pushed the half-open door, and saw a room brown with dirt and smoke, in which a Léonarde was trotting about busily occupied in dressing a table for about twenty persons. None of the guests had yet arrived. After a glance thrown upon the ill-lighted room, whose paper was falling in tatters, the nobleman seated himself near a stove which smoked and roared in a corner. Led by the noise that the count made in entering and laying down his cloak, the steward appeared promptly. Imagine a lean cook, dried-up, of tall stature, with a generously large, coarse nose, and casting around him, momentarily and with feverish anxiety, a look which was meant to express prudence. On beholding Andrea, whose whole attire proclaimed great ease, the *Signor* Giardini bowed respectfully. The count manifested a desire to take

his meals habitually in company with some countrymen, and to pay in advance for a certain number of tickets; he also gave to the conversation a familiar turn in order to arrive promptly at his purpose. Scarcely had he mentioned his unknown one, when the *Signor* Giardini made a grotesque gesture and looked upon his guest with a malicious air, allowing a smile to wander over his lips.

"*Basta!*" cried he, "*capisco!* Your lordship is led here by two appetites. *La Signora* Gambara will not have lost her time, if she has succeeded in interesting a nobleman as generous as you appear to be. In a few words, I will inform you of all we know here about this poor woman, truly well worthy of pity. The husband was born, I believe, at Cremona, and arrived from Germany; he wished to introduce new music and new instruments among the *Tedeschi!* Isn't it a pity?" said Giardini, shrugging his shoulders. "*Il Signor* Gambara, who believes himself a great composer, does not appear to me to be strong in other matters. A worthy man, moreover, and full of sense and wit, sometimes very amiable, especially when he has drunk a few glasses of wine,—a rare case, owing to his profound poverty,—he occupies himself night and day in composing operas and imaginary symphonies, instead of trying to gain his living honestly. His poor wife is compelled to work for all sorts of people, even for the lowest. What would you have? She loves her husband like a father, and cherishes him like a child. Many young fellows have dined at my house, in order to pay their

addresses to madame, but not one has succeeded," said he, emphasizing the last word. "*La Signora* Marianna is virtuous, my dear monsieur, too virtuous for her misery. Men give nothing for nothing nowadays. Therefore the poor woman will die of grief. Do you think her husband recompenses her for this devotion?—Pshaw! the gentleman does not bestow upon her even a smile, and their cooking is done at the bakehouse, for not only does this devil of a man not earn a penny, but he also spends the fruits of his wife's labor in instruments, which he shapes, lengthens, shortens, takes to pieces and puts together again until they can only produce sounds that frighten off the cats; then he is satisfied. And yet you will see in him the most amiable, the best of all men, and by no means idle, he is always at work. How shall I describe him? He is a madman, and unconscious of his condition. I have seen him, while filing and forging his instruments, eat black bread with an appetite which provoked me to envy, I, monsieur, who keep the best table in Paris. Yes, Your Excellency, in less than a quarter of an hour you will know what kind of man I am. I have introduced into the Italian kitchen refinements which will surprise you. Excellency, I'm a Neapolitan, that is to say, a born cook. But what good is instinct without science? Science! I have passed thirty years in acquiring it, and see what it has brought me to. My history is that of all men of talent. My experiments and tests have ruined three restaurants established successively at Naples, Parma, and Rome. Now that I am

reduced to the necessity of making a trade of my art, I generally obey my ruling passion. I serve these poor refugees with some of my choicest stews. In this way I ruin myself. Folly, you say? I know it; but what would you? Talent runs away with me, and I cannot resist preparing a dish which pleases me. They always perceive it, the jolly fellows. They know, I swear to you, who tended the coppers and saucepans, whether I or my wife. What's the result? of sixty or more guests that I saw every day at my table, at the period when I established this miserable restaurant, I do not receive to-day more than about twenty, to whom I give credit the greater part of the time. The Piedmontese, the Savoyards, are gone; but the connoisseurs, people of taste, the true Italians, have remained. For them, do I not also make a sacrifice? I very often give them, for twenty-five sous a head, a dinner which costs me double."

The conversation of Signor Giardini savored so much of the artless Neapolitan rascality, that the delighted count imagined himself once more at Gerolamo.

"Since this is the case, my dear landlord," said he, familiarly addressing the cook, "since chance and your confidence have acquainted me with the secret of your daily sacrifices, allow me to double the amount."

On finishing these words, Andrea tossed upon the stove a forty-franc piece, upon which Signor Giardini religiously returned to him two francs, fifty centimes,

not without some discreet ceremonies which highly delighted him.

"In a few minutes," resumed Giardini, "you will see your *donnina*. I will place you near the husband, and, if you wish to get into his good graces, talk about music; I have invited them both, poor souls! On account of the New Year, I regale my guests with a dish, in the preparation of which I believe I have surpassed myself."

The voice of Signor Giardini was drowned by the noisy salutations of the guests, who came two by two, or singly, rather capriciously, according to the custom of table-d'hôtes. Giardini endeavored to keep near the count, and acted as cicerone, pointing out to him his regular guests. He endeavored by his jests to provoke a smile upon the lips of a man in whom his Neapolitan instinct perceived a rich patron to be made the most of.

"He," said he, "is a poor composer who would wish to pass from romance to opera and cannot. He complains of directors, of music-dealers, of everybody except himself, and, certainly, he has no enemy more cruel.—You see what a florid complexion, what self-satisfaction, how little effort in his features, so well disposed for romance.—He who accompanies him, and has the air of a match-seller, is one of the greatest musical celebrities, Gigelmi! the greatest Italian orchestra leader known; but he is deaf, and is finishing his life, unfortunately deprived of that which embellished it for him.—Oh! here is our great Ottoboni, the most ingenuous old

man that the earth has produced, but he is suspected of being the most violent of those who are anxious for the regeneration of Italy. I wonder how they can banish so amiable an old man?"

Here Giardini looked at the count, who, feeling himself sounded on the political side, retrenched himself in an immobility altogether Italian.

"A man obliged to cook for everybody must deny himself the right of having a political opinion, Excellency," said the cook, continuing. "But everyone, on beholding this worthy man, who has more the air of a sheep than of a lion, would have said what I think before the Austrian ambassador himself. Besides, we are in a time when liberty is no longer proscribed, and is about to recommence its round. These worthy people believe so, at least," said he, approaching the ear of the count, "and why should I contradict their hopes? for my part, I do not hate absolutism, Excellency! Every great talent is absolutist! Well, although full of genius, Ottoboni gives himself unheard-of trouble for the instruction of Italy, he composes little books to enlighten the minds of children and those of the masses, he introduces them very skilfully into Italy, he employs every means to re-establish a moral for our poor country, which prefers enjoyment to liberty, perhaps with reason."

The count preserved an attitude so impassible, that the cook could discover nothing of his real political opinions.

"Ottoboni," he resumed, "is a holy man, he is

very willing to help others, all the refugees love him, for, Excellency, a liberal may have virtues!"

"Oh! oh!" said Giardini, "there's a journalist," pointing out a man who had the ridiculous costume that was formerly given to poets lodged in garrets, for his coat was threadbare, his boots cracked, his hat greasy, and his frock-coat in a deplorable state of decay.—"Excellency, that poor man is full of talent and incorruptible! he has made a mistake as to his time, he tells the truth to everybody, no one can endure him. He renders account of the theatres in two obscure journals, although he is sufficiently well instructed to write in the leading journals. Poor man! The others are not worth the trouble of describing to you, and your Excellency will guess them," said he, perceiving that on the appearance of the wife of the composer the count ceased to listen to him.

Beholding Andrea, the Signora Marianna started, and her cheeks flushed deeply.

"There he is," said Giardini, in a low voice, grasping the arm of the count, and pointing out a man of tall stature. "See how pale and grave he is! poor man! To-day, no doubt, his hobby-horse has not trotted to his satisfaction."

The amorous preoccupation of Andrea was disturbed by an irresistible charm which pointed out Gambara to the attention of every true artist. The composer had attained his fortieth year; but although his broad, bald forehead was furrowed with a few parallel and shallow wrinkles, notwithstanding his

hollow temples, where a few veins tinted with blue the transparent tissue of a smooth skin, and the depth of the orbits, in which his black eyes with their broad lids and well-defined lashes were set, the lower part of his face gave him every appearance of youth by the tranquillity of its lines and the softness of its contour. The first glance informed the observer that, in this man, passion had been repressed to the profit of intelligence, which alone had grown old in some great struggle. Andrea cast a rapid glance at Marianna, who was watching him. At sight of this beautiful Italian head, whose exact proportions and splendid coloring revealed one of those organizations in which all the human forces are harmoniously balanced, he measured the abyss which separated these two beings united by chance. Happy in the presage which he saw in this dissimilarity between the two, he had no intention of defending himself from a sentiment which must raise a barrier between the beautiful Marianna and him. Already he felt for this man, whose sole blessing she was, a sort of respectful pity in conjecturing the misfortune borne with dignity and serenity, which the amiable and melancholy countenance of Gambara implied. After having expected to meet in this man one of those grotesque personages so often brought upon the stage by the German story-tellers, and by the poets of *libretti*, he found a simple and reserved man, whose manners and dress, free from all oddity, were not lacking in nobility. Without affording the least appearance of luxury, his costume was more

becoming than that which would have corresponded to his profound misery; and his linen gave evidence of the tender care which watched over the smallest details of his life. Andrea raised his humid eyes upon Marianna, who did not blush, but allowed a half-smile to escape, in which, perhaps, appeared the pride which this mute homage inspired in her. Too seriously affected not to detect the least indication of complacency, the count, upon seeing himself so well understood, believed that he was loved. From that time, he was occupied in the conquest of the husband rather than in that of the wife, directing all his batteries against the poor Gambara, who, suspecting nothing, swallowed, without tasting them, the *bocconi* of Signor Giardini. The count opened the conversation upon a commonplace topic; but from the very first words, he held this intelligence to be affectedly blind, perhaps, on one point, but very clear-sighted on all others, and saw that it was less a question of caressing the fancy of this malicious good-natured man, than of endeavoring to understand his ideas. His guests, hungry folk, whose spirit awoke at the sight of a meal good or bad, manifested the most hostile disposition toward Gambara, and only awaited the end of the first course to give wings to their wit. One refugee, whose frequent glances betrayed pretentious projects regarding Marianna, and who thought to take a front place in the heart of the Italian by seeking to throw ridicule upon her husband, opened fire in order to acquaint the newly-arrived guest with the customs of the table-d'hôte.

"It's a good while now since we heard anything of the opera of *Mahomet*," cried he, smiling upon Marianna. "Is it possible, that, entirely absorbed in domestic cares and the charms of soup and boiled meat, Paolo Gambara would neglect a superhuman talent, and allow his genius to grow cold and his imagination to lose fire?"

Gambara was acquainted with the guests; he felt himself placed in a sphere so superior, that he no longer took the trouble to repel their attacks; he made no reply.

"It is not given to everybody," observed the journalist, "to have sufficient intelligence to comprehend the musical lucubrations of monsieur, and there, doubtless, lies the reason which hinders our divine *maestro* from appearing before the good Parisians."

"However," said the writer of romances, who had only opened his mouth to engulf everything that was offered, "I know people of talent who set a certain value upon the judgment of the Parisians. I have some reputation in music," added he, with a modest air, "I owe it entirely to my little vaudeville airs, and to the success which my country-dances obtain in the salons; but I expect soon to have a mass performed, composed for the anniversary of the death of Beethoven, and I believe that I shall be better understood in Paris than anywhere else. Will the gentleman do me the honor of attending?" said he, addressing Andrea.

"Thank you," replied the count, "I do not feel

myself endowed with the organs necessary to the appreciation of French singing, but, if you were dead, monsieur, and Beethoven had written the mass, I should not fail to go to hear it."

This jest put an end to the skirmish of those who wished to draw out Gambara in the direction of his whims for the amusement of the new-comer. Andrea aleady felt some repugnance to making so noble and touching a mania a subject of entertainment for so much vulgar wisdom. He continued, without reserve, a desultory conversation, during which the nose of Giardini frequently interposed itself between observations. Whenever any jocular remark in good style, or any paradoxical idea, escaped from Gambara, the cook put forward his head, cast a look of pity upon the musician, one of intelligence upon the count, and said in his ear: "*Ematto.*" A moment arrived when the cook interrupted the course of his judicious observations, in order to attend to the second course, to which he attached the greatest importance.—During his absence, which was brief, Gambara leaned toward the ear of Andrea.

"This good Giardini," he said to him, in a low voice, "has threatened us to-day with a dish of his trade which I desire you to respect, although his wife has superintended its preparation.

"The worthy man has the mania of kitchen innovation. He has ruined himself in experiments, the last of which obliged him to depart from Rome without a passport, a circumstance upon which he is silent. After having purchased a restaurant of

good reputation, he was charged with an entertainment given by a recently promoted cardinal, whose house was not yet furnished. Giardini thought he had found an opportunity for distinguishing himself; he succeeded; that very evening, accused of desiring to poison the whole conclave, he was compelled to leave Rome and Italy without packing his trunks. This misfortune inflicted the final blow, and now—"

Gambara placed a finger on the middle of his forehead, and shook his head.

"Otherwise," added he, "he is a worthy man. My wife assures me we are under many obligations to him."

Giardini appeared, carrying with precaution a dish, which he placed in the middle of the table, and afterward he returned modestly to take his place near Andrea, who was served first. As soon as he had tasted this dish, the count found an impassable interval between the first and second mouthful. Great was his embarrassment. He was extremely anxious not to displease the cook, who was observing him attentively. If the French restaurateur cares little about seeing a dish despised whose payment is assured, we must not suppose that it is the same with an Italian restaurateur, with whom, frequently, no praise given is sufficient. To gain time, Andrea complimented Giardini warmly, but he leaned toward the ear of the cook, passed a gold piece to him under the table, and requested him to go and purchase some bottles of champagne, giving

him the liberty of ascribing all the honor of this liberality to himself.

When the cook returned, all the plates were empty, and the apartment resounded with the praises of the steward. The champagne soon excited the heads of the Italians, and the conversation, until then restrained by the presence of a stranger, leaped over the bounds of a suspicious reserve, to spread itself here and there over the immense fields of political and artistic theories. Andrea, who knew of no other intoxications than those of love and poetry, soon rendered himself master of the general attention, and skilfully guided the discussion on the domain of musical questions.

"Be kind enough to inform me, sir," said he to the writer of country-dances, "how the Napoleon of little airs humbles himself to dethrone Palestrina, Pergolesi, Mozart, poor folk who pack up, bag and baggage, at the approach of this thunderbolt of a death-mass."

"Sir," answered the composer, "a musician is always embarrassed in answering, when his answer requires the co-operation of a hundred skilful performers. Mozart, Hadyn, and Beethoven, without an orchestra, amount to little."

"To little?" replied the count, "but everybody knows that the immortal author of *Don Juan* and the *Requiem* is named Mozart, and I have the misfortune not to know the name of the prolific writer of country-dances, which are so much in demand in the salons."

"Music exists independently of execution," said the orchestra leader, who, notwithstanding his deafness, had caught some words of the discussion. "In opening Beethoven's symphony in *C minor*, a musical man is soon translated into the world of Fancy upon the golden wings of the theme in *G natural*, repeated in *E* by the horns. He sees a whole nature by turns illuminated by dazzling sheafs of light, shadowed by clouds of melancholy, cheered by divine song."

"Beethoven is surpassed by the new school," said the writer of romances, disdainfully.

"He is not yet understood," answered the count, "how can he be surpassed?"

Here Gambara drank a large glass of champagne, and accompanied his libation with a half-approving smile.

"Beethoven," resumed the count, "has extended the boundaries of instrumental music, and no one has followed him in his flight."

Gambara dissented by a movement of the head.

"His works are especially remarkable for the simplicity of the plan, and for the manner in which this plan is followed out," rejoined the count.—"With the majority of composers, the orchestral parts, wild and disorderly, combine only for momentary effect, they do not always co-operate by the regularity of their progress to the effect of the piece as a whole.—With Beethoven, the effects are, so to speak, distributed in advance.—Like the different regiments which, by regular movements in a

battle, contribute to the victory, the orchestral parts of the symphonies of Beethoven follow the orders given in the general interest, and are subordinated to plans admirably well conceived.—There is equality, in this respect, with a genius of another order.—In the magnificent historical compositions of Walter Scott, the individual furthest removed from the action comes, at a given moment, by threads woven in the web of the intrigue, to attach himself to the dénouement."

"*E vero!*" said Gambara, in whom good sense seemed to return in inverse ratio to his sobriety.

Wishing to push the proof still further, Andrea forgot for a moment all his sympathies, he began to attack in the breach the European reputation of Rossini, and to bring that suit against the Italian School which it has won every evening for thirty years in more than a hundred theatres of Europe. Assuredly, he had much to do. The first words he pronounced raised around him a low murmur of disapproval. But neither the frequent interruptions, nor the exclamations, nor the frowns, nor the looks of pity, had any influence upon the enthusiastic admirer of Beethoven.

"Compare," said he, "the sublime productions of the author of whom I have just been speaking with what is called by common consent Italian music: what inertia of thought! what tameness of style! Those uniform turns, those commonplace cadences, those eternal flourishes thrown in at hazard without regard to the situation, that monotonous

crescendo that Rossini has brought into vogue, and which is to-day an integral part of all composition; finally, those nightingale voluntaries form a sort of musical chitchat, gossipy, perfumed, whose only merit lies in the facility of the singer and the agility of the vocalization. The Italian School has lost sight of the high mission of art. Instead of elevating the multitude to itself, it has descended to the multitude; it has won popularity merely by accepting the votes of all hands, appealing to the intelligence of the vulgar, who are in the majority. Its popularity is a juggler's trick of the cross-roads. Finally, the compositions of Rossini, in whom this music is personified, together with those of the masters who proceed more or less from him, appear worthy at most to collect a crowd in the streets around a barrel-organ, and to accompany the capers of *Punch and Judy*. I prefer the French music, and that is saying everything.—Long live the German music!—when it can sing," he added in a low voice.

This attack was the summing up of a long argument in which Andrea had sustained himself for more than a quarter of an hour in the highest regions of metaphysics with the ease of a somnambulist who walks upon the roofs. Deeply interested in these subtleties, Gambara had not lost a word of the whole discussion; he continued the conversation as soon as Andrea appeared to have abandoned it, and then a movement of attention took place among all the guests, of whom several were disposed to leave the place.

"You attack, with great vigor, the Italian School," resumed Gambara, much animated with the champagne, "which, moreover, is to myself rather indifferent.—Thank God, I am outside of those poverties more or less melodic! But a man of the world shows little gratitude toward that classic land whence Germany and France derived their first lessons. While the compositions of Carissimi, Cavalli, Scarlatti, Rossi, were being performed throughout Italy, the violinists of the Paris opera had the singular privilege of playing the violin with gloves. Lulli, who extended the empire of harmony, and was the first to class the discords, found, upon his arrival in France, but one cook and a mason who had voices and intelligence sufficient to execute his music. He made a tenor of the first, and metamorphosed the second into a bass. At that time, Germany, with the exception of Sebastian Bach, was ignorant of music. But, sir," said Gambara in the humble tone of a man who fears to see his words received with disdain or ill-will, "although young, you have studied, for a long time, these high questions of art, without which you would not expound them with so much clearness."

This remark made some of the audience smile, who had understood nothing of the distinctions established by Andrea. Giardini, persuaded that the count had uttered only unimportant phrases, pushed him slightly, laughing in his sleeve at a mystification in which he was fain to believe himself an accomplice.

"There are, in what you have just said to us, many things which appear to me very sensible," said Gambara, continuing; "but be careful! Your plea, in withering the Italian sensualism, appears to me to incline toward the German idealism, which is an equally fatal heresy. If men of imagination and sense, such as you, only desert one camp to pass to the other; if they cannot remain neutral between the two excesses, we shall eternally suffer the irony of those sophists who deny progress, and compare the genius of man to that cloth which, too short to cover entirely the table of Signor Giardini, only furnishes one extremity at the expense of the other."

Giardini bounded upon his chair, as if he had been stung by a horsefly, but a sudden reflection restored him to his amphitryonic dignity; he raised his eyes to Heaven, and again pushed the count, who began to think his host was madder than Gambara. This grave and religious manner of speaking of art interested the Milanese in the highest degree. Placed between these two insanities, of which one was so noble and the other so vulgar, who mutually scoffed at each other to the great amusement of the company, there was a moment when the count saw himself tossed about between the sublime and the ridiculous, those two farces of all human creation. Breaking, then, the chain of the incredible transitions which had brought him to this smoky hole, he believed himself the sport of some strange hallucination, and no longer regarded Giardini and Gambara but as two abstractions.

Meanwhile, at a final sally of buffoonery by the orchestra leader, who replied to Gambara, the guests had retired amid roars of laughter. Giardini left to prepare the coffee, which he wished to offer to the élite of his guests. His wife cleared the table. The count, seated near the stove, between Marianna and Gambara, was precisely in the situation which the infatuated one found so desirable: he had the sensualism on his left, and the idealism on his right. Gambara, meeting for the first time a man who did not laugh in his face, lost no time in departing from generalities in order to speak of himself, of his life, of his works, and of the musical regeneration of which he believed himself the Messiah.

"Listen, you who have not insulted me so far! I wish to relate to you my life, not to parade a constancy which does not come from myself, but for the greater glory of him who has put his strength in me. You appear good and pious; if you do not believe in me, at least you will pity me: pity is of man, faith comes from God."

Andrea, blushing, withdrew beneath his chair a foot which grazed that of the beautiful Marianna, and concentrated his attention upon her, while listening to Gambara.

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"I was born at Cremona, of a manufacturer of instruments, a pretty good performer, but stronger as a composer," resumed the musician. "I was able, therefore, at an early age, to acquire the laws of musical construction, in its double expression, material and spiritual, and as an inquisitive child, to make remarks which, later, have been represented in the spirit of the matured man. The French drove us away, my father and myself, from our home. We were ruined by the war. From the age of ten years, I began the wandering life to which nearly all men have been condemned who revolved in their mind innovations in art, science, or politics. Fate, or the dispositions of their minds, which do not agree with the compartments in which bourgeois minds are contained, impel them providentially to the points upon which they must receive their instruction. Incited by my passion for music, I went from theatre to theatre throughout Italy, living upon little, as people live there. Sometimes I took the bass in an orchestra; at other times, I found myself upon the stage in the choruses, or under the stage with the machinists. Thus I studied music in all its effects, interrogating the instrument and the human voice, asking myself in what they differ, in what they agree, listening to the scores and applying the laws which my father had taught me. At times, I travelled, repairing

instruments. It was a life without bread in a country where the sun always shines, where art is everywhere, but where there has been no money anywhere for the artist since Rome has been only in name the queen of the Christian world. Sometimes heartily welcomed, sometimes driven away for my poverty, I did not lose courage; I listened to the voice within, which proclaimed to me glory! Music appeared to me to be in its infancy. This opinion I have retained.

"All that remains to us of the musical world prior to the seventeenth century has proved to me that the ancient authors were acquainted with melody only; they were ignorant of harmony and of its immense resources. Music is at once a science and an art. The roots which it has in physics and mathematics make it a science; it becomes an art by inspiration, which employs unconsciously the theorems of science. It holds to physics by the very essence of the substance which it employs: sound is modified air; air is composed of principles which, without doubt, discover in us analogous principles which correspond to them, sympathize with them, and expand by the power of thought. Thus the air must contain as many particles of different elasticities, and capable of as many vibrations of different lengths as there are tones in the sonorous bodies, and these particles perceived by our ear, set in motion by the musician, correspond to ideas according to our organizations. In my opinion, the nature of sound is identical with that of light. Sound is

light under another form: both proceed by vibrations which terminate in man and which he transforms into thoughts in his nervous centres. Music, like painting, makes use of bodies which possess the power of separating such or such a property from the mother-substance in order to compose pictures of it. In music, the instruments perform the office of the colors which the painter employs. Since every sound produced by a sonorous body is always accompanied by its major third and its fifth, and affects particles of dust placed upon a stretched parchment, so as to trace upon it figures of geometrical construction, always the same, according to the different volumes of sound, regular when a harmony is produced, and without precise forms in the case of a discord, I say that music is an art woven in the very bowels of Nature. Music obeys physical and mathematical laws. The physical laws are little known, the mathematical laws are better known; and since their relations began to be studied, harmony has been created to which we owe Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Rossini, fine geniuses, who have certainly produced music superior to that of their predecessors, whose genius, moreover, is incontestable. The old masters sang instead of arranging art and science, a noble alliance which allows us to melt into one all the beautiful melodies and powerful harmony. Now, if the discovery of the mathematical laws has produced these four great musicians, where might we not arrive if we found the physical laws in virtue of which—understand

this well—we collect in greater or less quantity, according to the proportions to be sought, a certain ethereal substance diffused in the air, and which gives us music as well as light, the phenomena of vegetation as well as those of zoölogy. Do you understand? These new laws would arm the composer with new powers in offering him instruments superior to present instruments and, perhaps, a harmony which, compared with that which now governs music, would be truly grand.

"If every modified sound answers to a power, we must know that power, in order to unite all these forces according to their true laws. Composers work in substances which are unknown to them. Why have the instrument of metal and the instrument of wood, the bassoon and the horn, so little resemblance, though employing the same substances,—the constituent gases of the air? Their dissimilarity proceeds from some decomposition of these gases or from an apprehension of principles peculiar to them, and which they return modified, in virtue of unknown powers. If we knew these powers, science and art would gain. What extends science, extends art. Well, I have scented out these discoveries, I have made them."

"Yes," remarked Gambara, becoming animated, "hitherto man has rather observed the effects than the causes. If he penetrated the causes, music would become the greatest of all the arts. Is it not the one that penetrates deepest into the soul? You see only what the picture shows you, you hear only

what the poet says to you; music goes far beyond: does it not shape your thought? does it not arouse the torpid memory? Take a thousand souls in a hall: a motive bursts forth from the throat of Pasta, whose execution responds happily to the thoughts which burned in the soul of Rossini when he wrote the air; Rossini's phrase transmitted into those souls develops as many different poems; to this one appears a woman long dreamed of; to that one, I know not what bank along which he has strolled, and whose trailing willows, clear wave, and the hopes that danced beneath the leafy bowers appear to him; this woman recalls the thousand feelings that tortured her during an hour of jealousy; another thinks of the unsatisfied desires of her heart, and paints with the rich colors of the dream an ideal being to whom she surrenders herself, experiencing the delight of the woman caressing her chimera in the Roman mosaic; another imagines that she will realize some desire that very evening, and plunges in advance into the torrent of pleasures, receiving the buoyant waves upon her burning breast. Music alone has the power of restoring us to ourselves; while other arts give us defined pleasures. But I am going astray. Such were my first ideas, very vague, for an inventor at first gets but a glimpse of a sort of Aurora. I carried, therefore, these glorious ideas at the bottom of my wallet, they enabled me to eat cheerfully the dry crust which I often dipped in the water of the fountains; I worked, I composed airs, and, after having executed them upon any

sort of instrument, I resumed my travels through Italy.

"Finally, at the age of twenty-two, I came to live in Venice, where, for the first time, I tasted tranquillity, and found myself in a supportable condition. There I made the acquaintance of an old Venetian nobleman, who was pleased with my ideas, who encouraged me in my researches, and procured me employment in the theatre of Venice. Living was cheap, lodging cost little. I occupied rooms in that palace Capello whence the famous Bianca stepped forth one evening, who became grand duchess of Tuscany.—I imagined that my unknown glory would also go forth thence some day to be crowned. I passed the evenings at the theatre, and the days at work. I met with a disaster. The performance of an opera, in whose score I had tried my music, failed. They understood nothing of my music of the *Martyrs*. Give Beethoven to the Italians, they are lost. No one had the patience to await an effect prepared by different themes assigned to each instrument, which were to rally together in a grand whole. I had founded some hopes on the opera of the *Martyrs*, for we always discount success, we lovers of the blue goddess, Hope! When we believe ourselves destined to produce great things, it is difficult not to have a presentiment of them: the bushel always has chinks through which the light passes.

"In this house lived the family of my wife, and the hope of obtaining the hand of Marianna, who often smiled upon me from her window, had contributed

much to my efforts. I fell into a dark melancholy, measuring the depth of the abyss into which I had fallen, for I saw clearly a life of misery, a constant struggle, in which love must perish. Marianna, like genius, with feet together, leaped over all difficulties. I will not tell you the little happiness which gilded the beginning of my misfortunes. Terrified by my fall, I judged that Italy, with a paucity of comprehension, and lulled by constantly expressed, routine phrases, was not disposed to receive the innovations which I meditated; therefore I thought of Germany. Travelling into this country, I passed through Hungary, I listened to the thousand voices of nature, and I strove to reproduce those sublime harmonies with the aid of instruments which I constructed or modified for this purpose. These experiments were attended with enormous expense, which soon absorbed our savings. That was, however, our happiest time: I was appreciated in Germany. I know nothing in my life greater than this period. I cannot compare anything to the tumultuous sensations which attacked me when near Marianna, whose beauty then was clothed with celestial splendor and power. Must I say it? I was happy.

"During those hours of weakness, more than once I addressed to my passion the language of terrestrial harmony. I happened to compose some of those melodies which resemble geometric figures, and are much prized in the society in which you live. I no sooner met with success than I encountered invincible obstacles multiplied by my compeers, all filled

with treachery or folly. I had heard France spoken of as a country where innovations were favorably received. I desired to go there; my wife found some means, and we arrived in Paris. Till then they had not laughed in my face. But, in this dreadful city, I was obliged to endure this new kind of torture to which misery soon added its poignant anguish. Reduced to lodging in this infected neighborhood, we have lived for several months on Marianna's work alone, who has plied her needle in the service of the unfortunate women who make this street their customary walk. Marianna declares that, among these poor women, she has met with respect and generosity, which I attribute to the ascendency of virtue so pure that vice itself is constrained to respect it."

"Hope!" said Andrea. "Perhaps you have arrived at the termination of your trials. Until my efforts, joined to your own, have brought your works to light, allow a fellow-countryman, an artist like yourself, to offer you some advance upon the infallible success of your score."

"All that enters into the conditions of material life belongs to the province of my wife," replied Gambara. "She will decide what we can accept without blushing from so gallant a man as you appear to be. As for me, who have not permitted myself for a long time to enter into such prolonged confidences, I ask your permission to leave you. I see a melody that invites me, it passes and dances before me, naked and shivering, like a beautiful girl

who demands of her lover the clothes which he keeps concealed. Adieu! I must go and dress a mistress, I leave to you my wife."

He made his escape, like a man who reproached himself for having lost valuable time, and Marianna, embarrassed, wished to follow him; Andrea dared not detain her; Giardini came to the succor of both.

"You have heard, *signorina*," said he. "Your husband has left you more than one affair to regulate with the seigneur comte."

Marianna sat down again, but without raising her eyes to Andrea, who hesitated to speak to her.

"Will not the confidence of Signor Gambara," said Andrea in a broken voice, "ensure me that of his wife? Will the beautiful Marianna refuse to make me acquainted with the history of her life?"

"My life," replied Marianna, "my life is that of the ivy. If you would learn the history of my heart, you must believe me to be as exempt from pride as devoid of modesty to ask of me its recital after what you have just heard."

"And of whom shall I ask it?" cried the count, with whom passion was already extinguishing understanding.

"Of yourself," answered Marianna. "Either you have already understood me or you will never understand me. Try to question yourself."

"I consent, but you will listen to me. This hand which I have taken, you will leave in mine so long as my recital shall be faithful."

"I am listening," said Marianna.

"The life of a woman begins with her first passion," said Andrea. "My dear Marianna began to live only on the day she, for the first time, saw Paolo Gambara; to enjoy a deep passion was to her a necessity, but especially to have some interesting weakness to protect, to support. The fine womanly organization with which she is endowed calls, perhaps, still less for love than for maternity. You sigh, Marianna? I have touched one of the living wounds of your heart. It is a fine part for you to take, so young, that of protectress of a fine intelligence gone astray. You said to yourself: 'Paolo will be my genius, I shall be his reason; we two shall make that being, almost divine, which is called an angel, that sublime creature that enjoys and comprehends without Wisdom's stifling love.' Then, in the first fervor of youth, you heard those thousand voices of nature that the poet wished to reproduce. Enthusiasm seized you when Paolo spread out before you those treasures of poetry, seeking the formula in the sublime but limited language of music, and you admired him while a delirious exaltation carried him far from you, for you were fain to believe that all that wandering energy would be finally restored to love. You were ignorant of the tyrannical and jealous empire which thought exercises over the brains which become enamored of her. Gambara had given himself up, before becoming acquainted with you, to the proud and vindictive mistress with whom you have in vain disputed for him up to this day. A single moment you had a glimpse of happiness.

"Fallen from the heights to which his spirit incessantly soared, Paolo was astonished to find the reality so sweet; you might well have thought that his folly would fall asleep in the arms of love. But music soon recovered her prey. The dazzling mirage, which had suddenly transported you to the midst of the delights of a mutual passion, rendered the solitary path in which you were engaged more arid and gloomy. In the story which your husband has just given us, as in the striking contrast between your features and his, I have caught a glimpse of the secret anguish of your life, the sorrowful mysteries of this ill-assorted union in which you have assumed the lot of suffering. If your conduct was always heroic, if your energy failed not once in the exercise of your painful duties, perhaps, in the silence of your solitary nights, that heart whose beating at this moment swells your breast murmured more than once. Your most cruel torture was the very greatness of your husband: less noble, less pure, you might have been able to abandon him; but his virtues sustained yours; between your heroism and his you asked yourself who would give way the last. You were pursuing the real greatness of your task, as Paolo was pursuing his chimera. If the love of duty alone could have sustained and guided you, perhaps the triumph might have seemed easier; it might have been sufficient to kill your heart and to transport your life into the world of abstractions, religion would have absorbed the rest, and you would have lived in an idea, like the holy women who extinguish

at the foot of the altar the instincts of nature. But the charm that overspread the whole person of your Paul, the elevation of his mind, the rare and touching evidences of his tenderness, drove you constantly out of this ideal world, where virtue wished to retain you; they restored your strength ceaselessly exhausted in struggling against the phantom of love. You doubted not as yet! the slightest gleams of hope carried you away in pursuit of your sweet chimera. Finally, the deceptions of so many years have exhausted your patience; an angel's might long since have failed. To-day, this appearance so long pursued is a shadow, not a substance. A madness which touches genius so closely must be incurable in this world. Struck with this thought, you have reflected upon your whole youth, if not lost, at least sacrificed; you have recognized with bitterness the error of nature, which gave you a father when you called for a husband. You wondered whether you had not exceeded the duties of the wife in devoting yourself entirely to this man who reserved himself for science. Marianna, let me retain your hand, all that I have said is true. And you have cast your eyes around you; but you were then in Paris, and not in Italy, where they know well how to love—"

"Oh! let me finish this recital," cried Marianna; "I would rather say these things myself. I will be frank. I feel now that I am speaking to my best friend. Yes, I was in Paris when everything passed within me which you have just explained so clearly; but when I saw you, I was saved; for nowhere had

I met with the love dreamed of from my childhood. My costume and my dwelling withdrew me from the observation of men like yourself. Some young men, whom their situation did not permit to insult me, became still more odious to me by the levity with which they treated me. Some scoffed at my husband as a ridiculous old man, others basely sought to win his favor in order to betray him; all spoke of my separating from him. No one understood the worship which I had paid to that soul, which is only so far from us because it is so near to heaven, to that friend, to that brother whom I wish always to serve. You alone have understood the tie which binds me to him, is it not so? Tell me that you take a sincere interest in my Paul, and without any ulterior motive—"

"I accept this praise," interrupted Andrea; "but do not go further, do not compel me to contradict you. I love you, Marianna, as they love in that beautiful country where we were both born; I love you with all my soul and all my strength; but before offering you this love, I wish to render myself worthy of yours. I will try a last effort to restore to you the man whom you have loved since childhood, the man whom you will always love. Awaiting success or defeat, accept without blushing the assistance that I wish to give you both; to-morrow we will go together and choose a lodging for him. Do you esteem me sufficiently to associate me in the functions of your guardianship?"

Marianna, astonished at this generosity, extended

her hand to the count, who left, trying to escape the civilities of Signor Giardini and his wife.

The following day, the count was introduced by Giardini into the apartment of the married couple. Although the lofty mind of her lover was already known to her, for there are certain souls that promptly interpenetrate, Marianna was too good a housewife not to betray the embarrassment she felt in receiving so great a lord in so poor a room. Everything there was very clean. She had spent the whole morning in dusting its strange furniture, the work of Signor Giardini, who had constructed it in his leisure moments with the remains of instruments rejected by Gambara. Andrea had never seen anything so extravagant. In order to maintain a becoming gravity, he ceased to observe a grotesque bed contrived by the malicious cook in the case of an old harpsichord, and turned his eyes to the bed of Marianna, a narrow little couch whose only mattress was covered with white muslin, a sight which inspired him with thoughts at once sad and sweet. He desired to speak of his projects and employment of the morning, but the enthusiastic Gambara, believing that he had at last met with a benevolent listener, took possession of the count and compelled him to listen to the opera which he had written for Paris.

"And first, monsieur," said Gambara, "permit me to inform you in two words of the subject. Here, the people who receive musical impressions do not develop them in themselves, as religion teaches us to

develop by prayer the holy texts; it is, therefore, very difficult to make them understand that there exists in nature an eternal music, a sweet melody, a perfect harmony, disturbed only by the independent revolutions of the divine will as the passions are by the will of men. I had, then, to find an immense frame which might embrace the effects and the causes, for my music has for aim to offer a picture of the life of nations taken at its most elevated point of view. My opera, whose libretto has been composed by myself, for a poet would never have developed its subject, embraces the life of Mahomet, a personage in whom the magic of the ancient Sabianism and the oriental poetry of the Jewish religion are united to produce one of the grandest of human poems, the domination of the Arabs. Certainly, Mahomet has borrowed from the Jews the idea of absolute government, and from the pastoral or Sabian religions the progressive movement which created the brilliant empire of the califs. His destiny was written in his very birth; he had for father a pagan, and for mother a Jewess. Ah! to be a great musician, my dear count, it is necessary also to be very learned. Without instruction, no local color, no ideas in the music. The composer who sings in order to sing is an artisan, and not an artist. This magnificent opera continues the great work which I had undertaken. My first opera was named the *Martyrs*, and I must write a third: *Jerusalem Delivered*. You grasp the beauty of this triple composition and its diverse resources: the Martyrs, Mahomet, Jerusalem,—the God of the

West, that of the East, and the struggle of their religions around a tomb. But let us not speak of my greatness forever lost! Here is the summary of my opera:

"The first act," said he, after a pause, "offers Mahomet, whom his uncle has placed with Khadijah, a rich widow, as factor; he is amorous and ambitious; driven out of Mecca, he takes flight to Medina, and dates his era from his flight—The Hegira.—The second shows Mahomet as prophet, and founding a religious war. The third presents Mahomet disgusted with everything, having exhausted life, and concealing the secret of his death in order to become a deity,—last effort of human pride. You will judge of my manner of expressing by sounds a great fact which poetry could only render imperfectly by words."

Gambara sat down to the piano with a self-possessed air, and his wife brought him the voluminous papers of his score, which he did not open.

"The whole opera," said he, "rests upon a bass as upon a rich territory. Mahomet must have had a majestic bass voice, and his first wife had necessarily a contralto voice. Khadijah was aging, she was twenty years of age. Attention, here is the overture! It begins—*C major*—by an *andante—three-four time*.—Do you hear the melancholy of the ambitious one whom love does not satisfy? Through his complainings, by a transition to the relative time,—*E flat, allegro, common time*,—are heard the cries of the amorous epileptic, his fury, and some

THE OPERA OF MAHOMET

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warlike motives, for the all-powerful sabre of the califs begins to gleam before his eyes. The beauties of the matchless woman give him the sentiment of that plurality of love which strikes us so much in *Don Giovanni*. Hearing these motives, do you not catch a glimpse of the paradise of Mahomet? But here—*A flat major, six-eight*—is a *cantabile* capable of expanding the soul most rebellious to music: Khadijah has understood Mahomet! Khadijah announces to the people the interviews of the prophet with the angel Gabriel—*Maestoso sostenuto in F minor.* The magistrates, the priests, the power, and the religion, that feel themselves attacked by the innovator as Socrates and Jesus Christ attacked expiring and outworn powers and religions, are pursuing Mahomet, and are driving him from Mecca—*strette in C major.*—Arrives my fine dominant—*G, common time;*—Arabia listens to her prophet, the horsemen arrive—*G major, E flat, B flat, G minor, always common time.*—The avalanche of men increases!—The false prophet has commenced upon a colony what he is about to do through the world—*G, G.*—He promises to the Arabs universal domination, he is believed, because he is inspired. The crescendo begins—*by this same dominant.*—Here are some flourishes—*in C major*—of the brass instruments, laid upon the harmony, which separate and advance into the light to express the first triumphs. Medina is conquered for the prophet, and they march upon Mecca—*outburst in C major.*—The powers of the orchestra develop like a conflagration, every instrument

speaks, here are torrents of harmony. Suddenly the *tutti* is interrupted by a graceful motive—*a minor third*.—Listen to the last cantilena of devoted love! The woman who has sustained the great man dies concealing from him her despair, she dies in the triumph of him with whom love has become too vast to remain with a woman, she adores him sufficiently to sacrifice herself to the greatness which kills her! What fire of love! Here is the desert which invades the world—*the C major resumes*.—The forces of the orchestra return and reunite in a terrible fifth part of the fundamental bass which expires, Mahomet grows weary, he has exhausted all. Behold him who wished to die a god! Arabia adores him and prays, we fall back into my first theme of melancholy—*in C minor*—at the rise of the curtain.—Do you not find," said Gambara, ceasing to play and turning toward the count, "in this music, quick, opposed, capricious, melancholy, and always great, the expression of the life of an epileptic, mad with pleasure, neither able to read nor write, making of each of his faults a step for the footstool of his greatness, turning his faults and his misfortunes into triumphs? Have you not had the idea of his seductive power over a greedy and amorous people, in this overture, a specimen of the opera?"

At first, calm and severe, the countenance of the maestro, in which Andrea had sought to divine the ideas which he expressed with an inspired voice, of which an undigested amalgam of sounds only afforded

a slight idea, became animated by degrees, and finally assumed an impassioned expression which reacted upon Marianna and upon the cook. Marianna, too much affected by the passages in which she recognized her own situation, had not been able to conceal the expression of her regard from Andrea. Gambara wiped his forehead and darted his glance with such force toward the ceiling that he seemed to pierce it and ascend to the skies.

"You have seen the peristyle," said he; "now we enter into the palace. The opera commences. ACT FIRST. Mahomet, alone, on the front of the stage, begins an air—*F natural, common time*—interrupted by a chorus of camel-drivers who are near a well at the back of the stage—*they create a clashing in the rhythm; twelve-eight.*—What majestic woe! It will touch the giddiest women, penetrating their bowels, if they have no heart. Is it not the melody of genius restrained?"

To the great astonishment of Andrea, for Marianna was accustomed to it, Gambara contracted his throat so violently, that only choking sounds proceeded from it, very similar to those emitted by a hoarse watch-dog. The light foam which now whitened the lips of the composer made Andrea shudder.

"His wife arrives—*A minor.*—What a magnificent duet! In this piece I express how Mahomet has the will, how his wife has the intelligence. Khadijah therein declares that she is about to devote herself to a work which will deprive her of the love of her young husband. Mahomet desires to conquer

the world, his wife has divined it, she has seconded him by persuading the people of Mecca that her husband's epileptic attacks are the consequence of his intercourse with the angels. Chorus of Mahomet's first disciples, who come to promise him their aid—*C sharp minor, sotto voce.*—Mahomet leaves to visit the angel Gabriel—*recitative in F major.*—His wife encourages the chorus—*air interrupted by the accompaniments of the chorus. Bursts of voices sustain the grand and majestic singing of Khadijah. A major.*—ABDALLAH, the father of Ayesha, the only maiden whom Mahomet has found a virgin and whose name for this reason the prophet changed to that of ABU-BEKR,—*father of the virgin,*—advances with Ayesha and separates from the chorus—*by phrases which govern the rest of the voices and which sustain the air of Khadijah in joining with it, in counterpoint.*—Omar, father of Hafsa, another maid whom Mahomet is to possess, imitates the example of Abu-Bekr, and comes with his daughter to form a quintet. The virgin Ayesha is a first soprano. Hafsa sings the second soprano. Abu-Bekr is a bass, Omar is a barytone. Mahomet reappears inspired. He sings his first bravura which commences the finale—*E major;*—he promises the empire of the world to his first believers. The prophet perceives the two maidens, and, by a sweet transition,—*from B major to G major,*—he addresses to them amorous phrases. Ali, cousin of Mahomet, and Khâled, his greatest general, two tenors, arrive and announce the persecution; the magistrates, the soldiers, the lords, have

proscribed the prophet—*Recitative.*—Mahomet cries out in an invocation—*in C*—that the angel Gabriel is with him, and points to a pigeon that is flying away. The chorus of believers replies by accents of devotion in a modulation—*in B major.*—The soldiers, the magistrates, the great, arrive—*tempo di marcia; common time in B major.*—Struggle between the two choruses—*strette in E major.*—Mahomet—*by a succession of diminished sevenths descending*—yields to the storm and takes flight. The dark and gloomy color of this finale is varied by the motives of the three women who predict to Mahomet his triumph, and whose phrases will be found developed in the third act, in the scene where Mahomet tastes the delights of his grandeur."

At this moment, tears started to the eyes of Gambara, who, after a moment of emotion, cried:

"SECOND ACT. Behold the established religion! The Arabs guard the tent of their prophet, who consults God—*chorus in A minor.*—Mahomet appears—*prayer in F.*—What brilliant and majestic harmony lies beneath this chant, in which I have, perhaps, enlarged the boundaries of melody. Was it not a necessity to express the wonders of this great movement of men, which has created a music, an architecture, a poetry, a costume, and manners? On hearing it, you walk beneath the arcades of the Généralife, beneath the sculptured vaults of the Alhambra. The embellishments of the air depict the delicious Moorish architecture, and the poetry of that gallant and warlike religion which was to oppose

the warlike and gallant chivalry of the Christians. Some of the brass instruments in the orchestra awake and proclaim the first triumphs—*by a broken cadence.*—The Arabs adore the prophet—*E flat major.*—Arrival of Khâled, of Amrou, and Ali—*by a tempo di marcia.*—The armies of the believers have captured cities and reduced the three Arabias! What pompous recitative! Mahomet rewards his generals by giving them his daughters.

"Here," said Gambara, with a piteous air, "there is one of those ignoble ballets which cut the thread of the finest musical tragedies! But Mahomet—*B minor*—elevates the opera by his grand prophecy, which commences, in that poor Monsieur de Voltaire, with this verse:

"'The time of Arabia has, at last, arrived.'

It is interrupted by the chorus of triumphant Arabs—*twelve-eight accelerated.*—The clarions, the brass instruments, reappear with the tribes, which arrive in multitudes. General festivity, in which all the voices in succession join, and in which Mahomet proclaims his polygamy. In the midst of this glory, the wife, who has served Mahomet so well, separates herself by a magnificent air—*B major*—'And I,' said she, 'I, should I then be no longer loved?'—'We must separate; thou art a woman, and I am a prophet; I can have slaves, but no more equals.' Listen to this duet—*G sharp minor.*—What anguish! The wife comprehends the greatness which she has raised

with her hands, she loves Mahomet sufficiently to sacrifice herself for his glory; she adores him as a god, without judging him and without a murmur. Poor wife! the first dupe and the first victim! What a theme for the finale,—*B major*,—this grief worked in colors so dark at the background of those acclamations of the chorus, and married to the accents of Mahomet abandoning his wife as a useless instrument, yet letting it be seen that he will never forget her! What triumphant illuminations! what rockets of joyous and brilliant song burst from the two young voices —*first and second soprano*—of Ayesha and Hafsa, supported by Ali and his wife, by Omar and Abu-Bekr! Weep! rejoice! Triumphs and tears! This is life."

Marianna could not repress her tears. Andrea was so affected that his eyes became slightly moistened. The Neapolitan cook, shaken by the magnetic communication of the ideas expressed by the spasms of Gambara's voice, shared the emotion. The musician turned, saw this group, and smiled.

"At last you understand me!" he cried.

Never hero led in pomp to the Capitol, in the purple rays of his glory, amid the acclamations of a whole people, had such an expression when feeling the crown placed upon his head. The countenance of the musician sparkled like that of a holy martyr. No one disabused this error. A ghastly smile passed over the lips of Marianna. The count was terrified by the artlessness of this mania.

"THIRD ACT!" said the happy composer, resuming his seat at the piano—"*andantino solo*—Mahomet,

unhappy, in his seraglio, surrounded by women. Quartet of houris—*in A major*.—What pomp! What songs of happy nightingales! Modulations—*F sharp minor*.—The theme is represented—*upon the dominant E to return in A major*.—The pleasures are grouped, and assume form, in order to produce a contrast to the gloomy finale of the first act. After the dances, Mahomet rises and sings a great bravura air,—*F minor*,—regretting the unique and devoted love of his first wife, confessing himself vanquished by polygamy. Never had musician a like theme. The orchestra and the chorus of women express the joys of the houris, while Mahomet returns to the melancholy which opened the opera. Where is Beethoven," cried Gambara, "that I may be well understood in this prodigious return of the whole opera on itself? How all is supported upon the bass! Beethoven in this very way constructed his symphony in *C*. But his heroic movement is purely instrumental, while here my heroic movement is supported by a sextet of the finest human voices, and by a chorus of the believers, who watch at the DOOR of the holy house. I have all the riches of melody and harmony, an orchestra and voices.—Hear the expression of all human existences, rich or poor: *the struggle, the triumph, and the weariness!* Ali arrives, the Koran triumphs on all points—*duet in D minor*.—Mahomet confides in his two fathers-in-law, he is wearied of everything, he wishes to abdicate the power and die unknown to consolidate his work. Magnificent sextet—*B flat major*.—He pronounces his adieus—*solo in*

F natural.—His two fathers-in-law, constituted his vicars,—califs,—call the people. Grand triumphal march. General prayer of the Arabs on their knees before the holy house—*casba*—whence the pigeon takes flight—*same key*.—The prayer made by sixty voices, and led by women,—*in B flat*,—crowns this gigantic work in which the life of nations and of man is expressed. You have had all emotions, human and divine."

Andrea contemplated Gambara in stupid astonishment. If, at first, he had been shocked by the horrible mockery which this man presented in expressing the feelings of the wife of Mahomet without recognizing them in Marianna, the madness of the husband was eclipsed by that of the composer. There was not the appearance of a poetical or musical idea in the stunning cacophony which smote the ears: the principles of harmony, the first rules of composition, were totally foreign to this shapeless creation. Instead of music learnedly connected, which Gambara described, his fingers produced a succession of fifths, sevenths, octaves, major thirds, and steps from fourth without sixth to the bass, a combination of discordant sounds thrown at hazard which seemed combined to torture the least delicate ears. It is difficult to describe this capricious execution; we should require new words for this impossible music. Painfully affected by the mania of this worthy man, Andrea blushed and looked stealthily at Marianna, who, pale and with downcast eyes, could not repress her tears. In the midst of this

uproar of sounds, Gambara, from time to time, hurled exclamations which disclosed the rapture of his soul: he fainted with joy, he smiled at his piano, looked at it in anger, pulled out the tongue of it,—an expression in use among the inspired; finally, he seemed intoxicated with the poetry which filled his head and which he had vainly endeavored to translate. The strange discords which howled beneath his fingers had evidently resounded in his ear as celestial harmonies. Certainly, to judge by the inspired expression of his blue eyes open upon another world, by the rosy hue which colored his cheeks, and especially by the divine serenity which ecstasy shed over his proud and noble features, a deaf person would have supposed himself present at an improvisation due to some great artist. This illusion would have been so much the more natural, as the execution of this senseless music required a marvellous skill to accommodate itself to such fingering. Gambara must have worked for several years. Moreover, his hands were not alone employed, the complication of the pedals imposed upon the whole body perpetual agitation; the sweat, too, trickled down his features, whilst he labored to swell a crescendo with the feeble means the ungrateful instrument placed at his service: he stamped, panted, yelled; his fingers equalled in rapidity the forked tongue of a serpent; finally, at the last howl of the piano, he threw himself backward, and let his head fall upon the back of his armchair.

"By Bacchus, I am completely stunned!" cried

the count, on leaving; "a child dancing on the keyboard would make better music."

"Assuredly, chance could not avoid the harmony of two notes as skilfully as this devil of a man has done during an hour," said Giardini.

"How is it that the admirable regularity of Marianna's features is not distorted by continually hearing these frightful discords?" the count asked himself. "Marianna is threatened with disfiguring age."

"Seigneur, she must be snatched from this danger!" cried Giardini.

"Yes," said Andrea, "I have thought of it. But to ascertain whether my projects do not rest upon a false basis, I must support my suspicions upon an experience. I will return to examine the instruments which he has invented. So to-morrow, after dinner, we will have a late supper, and I myself will send the wine and the necessary dainties."

The cook bowed. The following day was employed by the count in directing the arrangement of the rooms he intended for the poor household of the artist. In the evening, Andrea came, and found, according to his instructions, his wines and cakes tastefully arranged by Marianna and the cook; Gambara triumphantly showed him the little drums on which were the grains of powder by whose aid he made his observations upon the different nature of the sounds emitted by his instruments.

"See," said he, "by what simple means I arrive at the proof of a great proposition! Acoustics thus reveals to me analogous actions of sound on all objects

which it affects. All harmonies proceed from a common centre, and preserve among themselves intimate relations; or, rather, harmony, one with light, is decomposed by our arts, as the ray by the prism."

Then he produced instruments constructed after his laws, explaining the changes he introduced in their contexture. Finally, he declared, not without emphasis, that he would crown this preliminary séance, sufficient at most to satisfy the curiosity of the eye, by letting us hear an instrument which might replace an entire orchestra, and which he called a panharmonicon.

"If it is the one in this case which brings on us the complaints of the neighborhood when you work at it," said Giardini, "you will not play it long, the commissary of police will soon come. Do you think of that?"

"If this poor fool remains," said Gambara, in the ear of the count, "it will be impossible for me to play."

The count got the cook away on promising him a reward if he would watch outside and prevent the patrol and the neighbors from interfering. The cook, who had not stinted himself in pouring out for Gambara, consented. Without being intoxicated, the composer was in that condition in which all the intellectual forces are overexcited, in which the walls of a room appear luminous, in which the mansards no longer have roofs, in which the soul flutters in the world of spirits. Marianna disengaged from its covers, not without difficulty, an instrument as large

as a grand piano, but having, in addition, an upper case. This odd-looking instrument offered, besides this case and its table, the bells of wind-instruments, and the pointed beaks of organ-pipes.

"Play for me, I beg of you, that prayer that you said was so fine, and which terminates your opera," said the count.

To the great astonishment of Marianna and Andrea, Gambara commenced with several chords, which revealed the great master; at first, admiration mingled with surprise followed their astonishment, then perfect ecstasy, in the midst of which they forgot both the place and the man.

The effects of an orchestra could not have been so grand as were the sounds of the wind-instruments, which recalled the organ, and which blended marvellously with the harmonic riches of the stringed instruments; but the imperfect condition of this singular machine impeded the developments of the composer, whose thought then appeared only greater. Frequently, perfection in works of art hinders the soul from exalting them. Is it not the case of the suit won by the sketch against the finished picture before the tribunal of those who finish the work by thought, instead of accepting it all done? The purest and sweetest music the count had ever heard arose beneath the fingers of Gambara like a cloud of incense above an altar.

The voice of the composer recovered its freshness and youth, and, far from injuring this rich melody, explained, strengthened, and directed it, as the low

and tremulous voice of a skilful reader, such as Andrieux, expands the sense of a sublime scene from Corneille or from Racine by adding thereto an innate poetry. This music worthy of the angels disclosed the treasures hidden in that immense opera, which could never be understood so long as this man persisted in explaining it in his moments of reason. Equally divided between the music and the surprise which that hundred-voiced instrument caused them, in which a stranger would have believed that the maker had concealed invisible young girls, so much did the sounds resemble at times the human voice, the count and Marianna dared not communicate their ideas to each other, either by look or word. The countenance of Marianna was illumined by a magnificent gleam of hope, which restored to her the splendors of youth. This renewal of her beauty, which united with the luminous apparition of her husband's genius, shadowed with a cloud of disappointment the delight which that mysterious hour gave to the count.

"You are our good genius," said Marianna. "I am tempted to believe that you inspire him, for I, who do not leave him, have never heard anything similar."

"And the adieus of Khadijah!" cried Gambara, who sang the cavatina to which he had given, the evening before, the epithet of sublime, and which made the two lovers weep, so well it expressed the most elevated devotion of love.

"Who could have dictated to you such chants?" demanded the count.

"The Spirit," replied Gambara; "when he appears, everything seems to me on fire. I see melodies face to face, beautiful and fresh, colored like flowers; they radiate, they resound, and I listen, but an infinite time is required to reproduce them."

"Encore!" said Marianna.

Gambara, who experienced no weariness, played without effort or grimace. He executed his overture with so great talent, and disclosed musical riches so new, that the count, dazzled, finally believed in magic like that which Paganini and Liszt exerted,—an execution which certainly changes all the conditions of music in making a poetry above musical creations.

"Well! will Your Excellency cure him?" demanded the cook as Andrea descended.

"I shall soon know," answered the count. "The intelligence of this man has two windows: one closed upon the world, the other open toward heaven; the first is music; the second, poetry; until to-day, he has obstinately persisted in remaining before the closed window, he must be led to the other. You are the first to put me on the way, Giardini, by telling me that your guest reasons better after having drunk a few glasses of wine."

"Yes," cried the cook, "and I guess Your Excellency's plan."

"If there is still time to thunder poetry in his ears, in the midst of the harmonies of beautiful music, we must put him in condition to hear and judge. Now, intoxication alone can aid me. Will

you help me to make Gambara drunk, my friend? Will not that do some injury to yourself?"

"What means Your Excellency?"

Andrea left hurriedly without replying, but laughing at the perspicacity that remained to this fool. On the following day, he came to see Marianna, who had passed the whole morning in completing a simple but becoming toilet, which had devoured all her savings. This change might have dissipated the illusion of a blasé man, but, with the count, caprice had become passion. Divested of her poetic misery, and transformed into a simple bourgeoise, Marianna caused him to dream of marriage. He gave her his hand on entering a coach, and communicated to her his project. She approved of all, happy to find her lover still greater, more generous, more disinterested, than she had hoped. She reached an apartment in which Andrea had taken pleasure in recalling his memory to his friend by some of those refinements which lead astray the most virtuous women.

"I shall only speak to you of my love at the moment when you despair of your Paul," said the count to Marianna, on returning to Rue Froidmanteau. "You shall be witness of the sincerity of my efforts; if they are efficacious, perhaps I shall not be able to resign myself to my part of friend, but then I shall avoid you, Marianna. Although I feel sufficiently courageous to work for your happiness, I shall not have sufficient strength to contemplate it."

"Do not speak thus, generosity also has its peril," she replied, with difficulty restraining her tears. "But what! you are leaving me already?"

"Yes," said Andrea, "be happy without distraction."

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If we must believe the cook, the change of hygiene was favorable to the married couple. Every evening after drinking, Gambara appeared less absorbed, conversed more and more sedately; finally, he spoke of reading the newspapers. Andrea could not help trembling, observing the unexpected rapidity of his success; but, although his anguish revealed to him the strength of his love, it did not cause him to falter in his virtuous resolution. He called one day to observe the progress of this remarkable cure. If the condition of his patient at first gave him joy, it was troubled by the beauty of Marianna, to which ease had restored all its splendor. From that time, he returned every evening to engage in sweet and serious conversation, to which he brought the light of temperate opposition to the singular theories of Gambara. He profited by the marvellous lucidity which the mind of the latter enjoyed upon all points which did not border too closely on his mania to cause him to admit principles of various branches of art equally applicable, later, to music. All went well so long as the fumes of the wine affected the head of the patient; but as soon as he had completely recovered, or rather lost his reason again, he relapsed into his mania. Nevertheless, Paolo allowed himself already to be more easily entertained by the

impression of external objects, and already his intelligence comprehended a greater number of points at a time. Andrea, who took an artist's interest in this semi-medical work, finally believed he could strike a decisive blow. He resolved to give at his hotel a repast to which Giardini should be admitted, from the fancy he had, not to separate the drama and parody, on the day of the first performance of the opera of *Robert le Diable*, at whose rehearsal he had been present, and which appeared to him calculated to open the eyes of his patient. After the second course, Gambara, already intoxicated, jested with much grace, and Giardini confessed that his culinary innovations were not worth the devil. Andrea had neglected nothing to perform this double miracle. The Orvieto, the Montefiascone, brought with the infinite precautions which their transportation requires, the Lachrymæ-Christi, the Giro, all the strong wines of the *cara patria*, caused the double intoxication of the vine and memory to ascend to the brains of the guests. At the dessert, the musician and the cook gayly renounced their errors; one hummed a cavatina from Rossini, the other heaped upon his plate morsels which he sprinkled with maraschino from Zara, in honor of the French cooking.

The count profited by the happy disposition of Gambara, who allowed himself to be led to the opera with the gentleness of a lamb. At the first notes of the introduction, the intoxication of Gambara seemed to dissipate, to give place to that febrile excitation which, at times, placed his judgment in

harmony with his imagination, whose habitual discord, no doubt, caused his mania, and the dominant idea of this great musical drama appeared to him in its splendid simplicity like a lightning-flash which furrowed the profound darkness in which he lived. To his unsealed eyes, this music described the immense horizons of a world in which he found himself thrown for the first time, recognizing therein accidents already seen in dreams. He believed himself translated to the plains of his country, where the beautiful Italy begins, which Napoleon so judiciously named the glacis of the Alps. Carried back by memory to the time when his young and active reason had not yet been troubled by the ecstasy of his overrich imagination, he listened in a religious attitude, and without desiring to utter a single word. The count also respected the interior labor which was being accomplished within this soul. Until half-past twelve, Gambara remained so profoundly immovable that the frequenters of the opera must have taken him for what he was, a drunken man. On returning, Andrea began to attack the work of Meyerbeer, in order to arouse Gambara, who remained plunged in one of those semi-sleeps common to drinkers.

"What is there, then, so magnetic in this incoherent score that it should put you in the condition of a somnambulist?" said Andrea, on arriving at his hotel. "The subject of *Robert le Diable* is doubtless far from being devoid of interest. Holtei has developed it with rare felicity in a very well written drama, filled with powerful and interesting situations; but

the French authors have managed to draw from it the most ridiculous story in the world. The absurdity of the librettos of Vesari and Schikaneder never equalled that of the poem of *Robert le Diable*, a real dramatic nightmare, which oppresses the spectator without giving rise to any strong emotions. Meyerbeer has given the devil too fine a part. Bertram and Alice represent the struggle of good and evil, the good and the bad principles. This antagonism offered the composer the most favorable contrast. The sweetest melodies placed beside harsh and heavy strains were a natural consequence of the form of the libretto; but, in the score of the German author, the demons sing better than the saints. The heavenly inspirations often contradict their origin, and if the composer leaves for a moment the infernal forms, he hastens to return to them, soon fatigued by the effort he has made to abandon them. The melody, that golden thread which should never be broken in so vast a composition, frequently disappears in the work of Meyerbeer. The sentiment is good for nothing, the heart plays no part there; moreover, we never meet with those happy themes, with those ingenuous strains, which stir all our sympathies and leave at the bottom of the soul a sweet impression. Harmony reigns sovereignly instead of forming the background, from which the groups of the musical picture stand forth. These discords, far from moving the hearer, merely excite in his soul a feeling analogous to that we should experience at the sight of a mountebank

suspended by a thread, and balancing himself between life and death. No gracious song ever comes to soothe these fatiguing irritations. We should suppose that the composer had no other object in view than to show himself capricious, fantastic; he seizes with eagerness the opportunity of producing an odd effect, without concerning himself about truth, musical unity, or the incapacity of voices overwhelmed beneath this instrumental avalanche—"

"Silence, my friend," said Gambara; "I am still under the charm of that admirable song of the infernal regions, which the trumpets render still more terrible,—a novel instrumentation. The broken cadences which give so much energy to Robert's song, the cavatina of the fourth act, the finale of the first, still hold me under the fascination of a supernatural power! No, the declamation of Glück himself never produced so prodigious an effect, and I am amazed at so much science."

"*Signor maestro*," replied Andrea, smiling, "permit me to contradict you. Glück, before writing, reflected a long time. He calculated all the chances, and arranged a plan which could be modified later by his inspirations in respect of detail, but which never permitted him to go astray on the road. Hence that energetic accentuation, that declamation throbbing with truth. I agree with you, that the science is great in Meyerbeer's opera, but this science becomes a defect when it isolates itself from inspiration, and I believe I have perceived in this work

the painful labor of an acute mind, which has culled its music from thousands of motives of unsuccessful or forgotten operas, in order to appropriate them in expanding, modifying, or concentrating them. But that has happened which happens to all makers of *centos*, the abuse of good things. This clever gleaner of notes lavishes discords which, being too frequent, end in wounding the ear and in accustoming it to those great effects which the composer should husband with care, in order to derive greater profit from them when the situation demands them. Those *enharmonic* transitions are repeated to satiety, and the abuse of the *plagal cadence* deprives it of a great part of its religious solemnity. I am well aware that every composer has his peculiar forms to which he returns in spite of himself, but it is essential to watch over one's self and to avoid this defect. A picture whose coloring should offer only blue or red would be far from truth and would fatigue the sight. So the rhythm, almost always the same in the score of *Robert*, casts a monotony over the ensemble of the work. As to the effect of the trumpets of which you speak, it has long been known in Germany, and what Meyerbeer gives us for new was always employed by Mozart, who made the chorus of devils in *Don Giovanni* sing in this way."

Andrea, while inducing him to fresh libations, endeavored to restore Gambara, by his contradictions, to the true musical sentiment, in showing him that his pretended mission in the world did not consist in regenerating an art beyond his faculties, but in

seeking, under another form, which was no other than poetry, the expression of his thought.

"You have understood nothing, dear count, of this immense musical drama," said Gambara, negligently, and placing himself before Andrea's piano, he struck the keys, listened to their sound, sat down, and appeared to think for a few moments as if to resume his own ideas. "And know first," he resumed, "that an intelligent ear like mine has recognized the labor of the setter of whom you speak. Yes, this music is chosen with love from among the treasures of a rich and fertile imagination, in which science has pressed the ideas to extract their musical essence. I will explain this labor to you."

He rose to put the tapers in the adjoining apartment, and, before resuming his seat, he drank a full glass of Giro, a wine of Sardinia that contains as much fire as the old wines of Tokay ever kindled.

"Do you see," said Gambara, "this music is made neither for the incredulous nor for those who do not love. If you have never experienced in your life the persistent attacks of an evil spirit that disturbs your object when you aim at it, that procures a sorrowful termination for your fairest hopes; in a word, if you have never perceived the devil's tail wriggling in this world, the opera of *Robert* will be for you what the Apocalypse is for those who believe that all ends with themselves. If, unfortunate and persecuted, you understand the Genius of Evil, that great ape that every moment destroys the work of God; if you imagine him not having loved, but

having violated an almost divine woman, and obtaining from this love the joys of paternity, so far as to prefer his son's remaining eternally miserable with him to his being eternally happy with God: finally, if you imagine the soul of his mother hovering over the head of her son, in order to rescue him from the horrible paternal seductions,—you will still have but a feeble idea of that immense poem which needs but little to rival the *Don Giovanni* of Mozart. *Don Giovanni* is superior by its perfection, I grant: *Robert le Diable* represents ideas, *Don Giovanni* excites sensations. *Don Giovanni* is, moreover, the only musical work in which harmony and melody are in exact proportion; therein lies the secret of its superiority to *Robert*, for *Robert* is more diffusive. But of what use is this comparison, if these two works are beautiful, each having its own peculiar beauties. As to myself, who groan under the repeated blows of the demon, *Robert* has spoken to me more energetically than to you, and I have found it at once vast and concentrated. Indeed, thanks to you, I have just lived in the beautiful country of dreams, where our senses are enlarged, where the universe unfolds itself in gigantic proportions in relation to man." There ensued a moment of silence. "I thrill again," said the unfortunate artist, "at the four measures of the kettle-drums, which have penetrated me to the bowels, and which open this short, this abrupt introduction, in which the trombone solo, the flutes, the hautboy, and the clarinet cast into the soul a fantastic color. That *andante* in C minor affords a

presentiment of the theme of the invocation of souls in the abbey, and enlarges the stage by the announcement of a struggle entirely spiritual.—I shuddered."

Gambara struck the keys with a sure hand, he expanded masterfully the theme of Meyerbeer by a sort of discharge of the soul, after the manner of Liszt. It was no longer a piano, it was the whole orchestra, the genius of music evoked.

"That is the style of Mozart!" he cried. "See how this German manages the chords, and by what learned modulations he makes terror march, to arrive at the dominant of *C*. I hear hell.—The curtain rises. What do I see? The only spectacle to which we give the name infernal, an orgy of knights, in Sicily. Behold, in this chorus in *F*, all human passions let loose by a bacchic *allegro*. All the threads by which the devil leads us are in motion. This is, indeed, the sort of joy which seizes men when they dance upon an abyss, they give themselves vertigo. What animation in this chorus! From this chorus, the reality of life, artless and homely life, is detached in *G minor* by a melody full of simplicity, that of Raimbaut. He refreshed my soul for a moment, this good man who describes the green and fertile Normandy, coming to recall it to Robert in the midst of intoxication. Thus the sweetness of the beloved country colors with a brilliant thread this dark début. Then follows that marvellous ballad in *C major*, accompanied by the chorus in *C minor*, and which tells its subject so well.—*I am Robert!* bursts forth immediately. The fury of the prince offended by his

vassal is no longer a natural fury; but it is about to be calmed, for memories of childhood arrive with Alice by that *allegro* in *A major* full of animation and grace. Do you hear the cries of persecuted innocence as it enters this infernal drama?—*No! no!*" sang Gambara, who was able to make his breathing piano sing. "His native land and its emotions are come! childhood and its memories have bloomed again in the heart of Robert; but behold the shade of the mother, which rises accompanied with sweet religious thoughts! Religion animates this fine romance in *E major*, in which is found a marvellous harmonic and melodic progression upon the words:

> "'For in the heavens, as on the earth,
> His mother will pray for him.'

"The struggle commences between the unknown powers and the only man who has in his veins the fire of hell to resist them. And that you may know him well, mark the entrance of Bertram, with which the great musician has covered as a ritornelle for the orchestra a recall of the ballad of Raimbaut. What art! What connection of all the parts, what power of construction! The devil is beneath, he conceals himself, he wriggles. With the terror of Alice, who recognizes the devil of the *Saint-Michel* of her village, the combat of the two principles is put down. The musical theme is about to develop, and by what varied phrases! Here the antagonism necessary to

every opera is forcibly illustrated by a fine recitative, such as Glück wrote, between Bertram and Robert:

"'Thou wilt never know to what excess I love thee.'

"This diabolic *C minor*, this terrible bass of Bertram, begins its undermining game, which will frustrate all the efforts of this violent-tempered man. For me, that is all frightful. Will crime have the criminal? will the executioner have his prey? Will misfortune devour the genius of the artist? Will disease kill the patient? Will the guardian angel preserve the Christian? Here is the finale, the gambling scene in which Bertram torments his son by causing him the most terrible emotions. Robert, stripped, angry, destroying everything, wishing to kill all, to put all to fire and sword, seems to be his son indeed, he is here so like him. What atrocious gayety in the *I laugh at thy blows* of Bertram! How well the Venetian barcarolle tints this finale! By what bold transitions this nefarious paternity returns to the stage to lead Robert back to the game. This début is overwhelming for those who develop the themes at the bottom of the heart, giving them the expansion which the composer has commanded them to communicate. There was only love to oppose to this great symphony, in which you detect neither monotony nor the employment of the same means: it is one and yet varied,—the characteristic of all that is grand and natural. I breathe, I arrive at the elevated sphere

of a gallant court; I hear the pretty phrases, fresh and slightly melancholy, of Isabelle, and the chorus of women in two parties and in a repetition which savors a little of the Moorish tints of Spain.

"At this point, the terrible music subsides into gentle strains, as a tempest abates, to arrive at that flowery, coquettish, well-modulated duet which resembles nothing in the preceding music. After the tumult of the camp, and of the adventure-seeking heroes, comes the picture of love. Thanks, poet! My heart could not have resisted longer. If I were not culling the daisies of a French comic opera, if I were not hearing the sweet humor of the woman who can love and console, I could not endure that terrible heavy note on which Bertram appears, replying to his son *If I permit it!* when he promises to his adored princess to triumph with the arms that she gives him. To the hope of the gambler, reformed by love, the love of the most beautiful woman,—for have you not seen her, that ravishing Sicilian, and her falcon eye sure of its prey?—What interpreters the music has found!—to the hope of the man, hell opposes its own, by this sublime cry: *To thee, Robert of Normandy!* Do you not admire the dark and profound horror impressed on those long and beautiful notes written upon *In the neighboring forest?* There are all the enchantments of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, as we recognize its chivalry in the chorus with its Spanish animation and in *the tempo di marcia*. What originality in this *allegro*, the modulations of the four kettle-drums harmonized!—*CD, CG.*—How much

grace in the call to the tournament! The animation of the heroic life of the time is all there, the soul unites with it, I read a romance of chivalry and a poem. The performance is ended, it seems that the resources of music are exhausted, you have heard nothing like it, and yet all is homogeneous. You have perceived human life in its sole and unique expression: 'Shall I be happy or unhappy?' of the philosophers: 'Shall I be lost or saved?' of the Christians."

Here Gambara rested on the last note of the chorus, he developed it with a melancholy air, and he arose to drink another large glass of Giro wine. This Semi-African liquor relumed the incandescence of his face, which the impassioned and marvellous execution of Meyerbeer's opera had rendered slightly pale.

"That nothing may be wanting to this composition," he resumed, "the great artist has generously given us the only comic duet that the demon can permit, the seduction of a poor troubadour. He has placed humor by the side of horror, a humor in which the only reality which appears in the sublime fancy of his work is lost: the poor and tranquil loves of Alice and Raimbaut; their life will be troubled with anticipated vengeance; great souls alone can feel the nobility which animates these comic airs; you do not find there the too abundant glitter of our Italian music, nor the commonplace of the French popular airs. It has something of the majesty of Olympus. There is the bitter smile of a

divinity opposed to the surprise of a troubadour don-juanized. Without this greatness, we should have returned too abruptly to the general tone of the opera, impressed in this horrible rage in diminished sevenths, which, ending in an infernal waltz, finally sets us face to face with the demons. With what vigor the couplet of Bertram in *B minor* is detached from the chorus of the infernal regions describing paternity mingled with those demoniacal chants by a frightful despair! What a ravishing transition—the arrival of Alice with the ritornelle in *B flat!* I still hear those songs of angelic freshness; is it not the nightingale after the storm? The great thought of the whole is thus found in the details, for what could be opposed to this agitation of the demons swarming in their hole, if not the marvellous air of Alice:

"'When I left Normandie'?

"The golden thread of the melody always runs through the powerful harmony as a celestial hope; it embroiders it, and with what profound skill! Never does genius loose the science that guides it. Here occurs the song of Alice in *B flat*, and again connected with the *F sharp*, the dominant of the infernal chorus. Do you hear the tremolo of the orchestra? They demand Robert in the assembly of the demons.—Bertram re-enters upon the stage, and here is found the culminating point of the musical interest, a recitative comparable with the grandest

composed by the great masters, the ardent struggle in *E flat*, in which break forth the two athletes, Heaven and Hell, the one by *Yes, thou knowest me!* upon a diminished seventh, the other by his *F* sublime: *Heaven is with me!* Hell and the Cross are face to face. The threats of Bertram to Alice follow, the most violent pathos in the world, the Genius of Evil displaying itself with complacency and supporting itself, as always, upon personal interest. The arrival of Robert, who gives us the magnificent trio in *A flat* without accompaniment, opens a first engagement between the two rival forces and man. See how clearly it is introduced," said Gambara, intensifying this scene by an impassioned execution which captured Andrea. "All this avalanche of music, from the four-four time of kettle-drums, has rolled toward this combat of three voices. The magic of Evil triumphs! Alice takes flight, and you hear the duet in *D* between Bertram and Robert; the devil plunges his talons into his heart, he rends it in order the better to appropriate it to himself; he employs every means: honor, hope, eternal and infinite joys, he makes everything brilliant to his eyes; he places him, like Jesus, upon the pinnacle of the Temple, and shows him all the joys of earth,—the casket of evil; he piques him to the display of courage, and the fine sentiments of the man burst forth in this cry:

"'Of the knights of my country,
Honor was always the stay!'

"At last, to crown the work, here is the theme that opened the opera fatally; here it is, this principal song in the magnificent evocation of souls:

> "'Nuns who repose beneath this cold stone,
> Hear ye me?'

"Gloriously pursued, the musical career is gloriously terminated by the *allegro vivace* of the bacchanal in *D minor*. Here is, indeed, the triumph of Hell! Roll, music! envelop us in thy redoubled folds! roll on and charm! The infernal powers have seized their prey, they hold it, they dance. This fine genius, destined to conquer, to reign, behold him lost! the demons exult, misery will stifle genius, passion will destroy the knight."

Here Gambara developed the bacchanal on his own account, improvising ingenious variations, and accompanying himself with a melodious voice, as if to express the inward sufferings he had experienced.

"Do you hear the heavenly plaints of neglected love?" he resumed; "Isabelle calls Robert to the midst of the grand chorus of knights going to the tournament, in which reappear the motives of the second act, in order to make it well understood that the third act is accomplished in a supernatural sphere. Real life is resumed. This chorus subsides at the approach of the enchantments of hell, which Robert brings with the talisman; the prodigies of the third act are to be continued. Here occurs the duet of the viol, in which the rhythm indicates well the

brutality of the desires of a man who is all-powerful; and in which the princess, by her lamentations, essays to call her lover back to reason. There the musician had placed himself in a situation difficult to overcome, and he has conquered by the most delicious piece of the opera. What adorable melody in the cavatina of *Grace for thee!* The women have well seized its meaning, they perceived themselves all constrained and spell-bound on the stage.—That piece alone would make the fortune of the opera, for they all thought they were contesting with some violent knight. Never was music so impassioned and dramatic. The whole world is then let loose against the reprobate. We might find fault with this finale for its resemblance to that of *Don Giovanni;* but there is in the situation this enormous difference, that in Isabelle a noble faith shines forth, a true love which will save Robert; for he disdainfully repels the infernal power which is confided to him, while Don Giovanni persists in his incredulities. This reproach is, moreover, common to all composers who, since Mozart, have written finales. The finale of *Don Giovanni* is one of those classic forms discovered for all time. Finally, all-powerful religion rises, with its voice that rules the worlds, that calls up all misfortunes to console them, all repentances to reconcile them. The entire house is affected by the accents of this chorus:

"'Unfortunate or guilty,
Delay not, but hasten here.'

Amid the horrible tumult of unrestrained passions, the holy voice might not have been heard; but, in this critical moment, the divine Catholic Church can thunder, she rises brilliant with light. Here I was astonished to find, after so many harmonic treasures, a new vein in which the composer hit upon the grand piece *Glory to Providence!* written in the manner of Handel. Robert arrives, distracted, rending the soul with his *Could I but pray!*

"Impelled by the decrees of hell, Bertram pursues his son and tries a last effort. Alice comes and discloses the mother; you hear then the grand trio toward which the opera has progressed: the triumph of the soul over matter, of the spirit of Good over the spirit of Evil. The religious chants banish the infernal chants, happiness beams resplendent. But here the music grows feeble: I see a cathedral instead of hearing the concert of the happy angels, some divine prayer of delivered souls applauding the union of Robert with Isabelle. We must not rest under the weight of hell's enchantments, we must leave with hope in the heart. I, a Catholic musician, I needed another prayer of Moses. I should have liked to know how Germany would have struggled against Italy, what Meyerbeer would have done to rival Rossini. However, in spite of this slight defect, the author may say that after five hours of such substantial music a Parisian prefers a decoration to a musical chef-d'œuvre! You have heard the acclamations accorded to this work, it will have five hundred

renderings! If the French have understood this music—"

"It is because it offers ideas," said the count.

"No, it is because it presents so masterfully the picture of the struggles in which so many expire, and because all individual existences may by memory connect themselves with it. Thus I myself, an unfortunate, would have been gratified to hear that cry of the celestial voices of which I have so often dreamed."

Gambara immediately fell into a musical ecstasy, and improvised the most melodious and the most harmonious cavatina that Andrea was ever to hear, a divine strain, divinely sung, whose theme had a grace comparable to that of the *O filii et filiæ*, but full of charms which only the most elevated musical genius could discover. The count remained lost in the deepest admiration; the clouds dispersed, the blue sky began to appear, figures of angels were seen, who lifted the veils which concealed the sanctuary; the light of Heaven fell in torrents. Soon, silence reigned. The count, astonished at no longer hearing anything, contemplated Gambara, who, with eyes fixed, and in the attitude of the *tériakis*, stammered the word *God*. The count waited until the composer descended from the enchanted countries, into which he had risen on wings diapered with inspiration, and resolved to illumine him with the light he should bring from them.

"Well!" said he, offering him another full glass and touching glasses with him, "you see that this

German has produced, according to you, a sublime opera without occupying himself with theory, while musicians who write grammars may, like literary critics, be detestable composers."

"You do not like my music, then?"

"I don't say that; but if, instead of aiming to express ideas, and if, instead of pushing to an extreme the musical idea, which makes you overshoot the mark, you would simply awaken in us sensations, you would be better understood, unless, however, you have mistaken your vocation.—You are a great poet."

"What!" exclaimed Gambara, "then twenty-five years of study would be useless! I should have to study the imperfect language of men, when I hold the key of the *celestial word!* Ah! if you were right, I should die—"

"You? no! You are big and strong, you would commence another life, and I—I would support you. We should offer the noble and rare alliance of a rich man and an artist who understand each other."

"Are you sincere?" said Gambara, struck with a sudden stupor.

"I have already told you, you are more a poet than a musician."

"Poet! poet! That is better than nothing. Tell me the truth, which do you prize more, Mozart or Homer?"

"I admire them equally."

"Upon your honor?"

"Upon my honor."

"Hum! one word more. What do you think of Meyerbeer and Byron?"

"You have judged them in thus bringing them together."

The carriage of the count was ready, the composer and his noble physician rapidly cleared the steps of the staircase, and in a few moments arrived in the presence of Marianna. On entering, Gambara threw himself into his wife's arms, who, turning away her head, retired a step; the husband, likewise, took a step backward, and leaned upon the count.

"Ah, monsieur," said Gambara, in a hollow voice, "at least, my mania should have been left me."

Then his head drooped and he fell.

"What have you done? he is dead-drunk," cried Marianna, casting upon the body a look in which pity contended with disgust.

The count, assisted by his valet, raised Gambara, who was placed upon his bed. Andrea went out, his heart full of a horrible joy.

On the following day, the count allowed the usual hour of his visit to pass; he began to fear that he had been his own dupe, and that he had sold, rather dear, wisdom and ease to this poor household, whose peace was forever troubled.

Giardini appeared at last, the bearer of a message from Marianna. She wrote:

"Come, the evil is not so great as you wished, cruel one!"

"Excellency," said the cook, while Andrea was making his toilet, "yesterday evening, you treated

us magnificently; but acknowledge that, apart from the wines, which were excellent, your steward did not serve you a dish worthy to figure upon the table of a true *gourmet*. Neither will you deny, I suppose, that the dish which was served you at my house, on the day you did me the honor to take a seat at my table, contained the quintessence of all those which soiled your magnificent service yesterday. I awoke this morning, therefore, thinking of the promise you made me of a situation as head-cook. I consider myself now an attaché of your household."

"The same idea occurred to me a few days ago," replied Andrea. "I spoke of you to the secretary of the Austrian embassy, and, in the future, you may cross the Alps whenever you please. I have a château in Croatia, which I seldom visit; there you will combine the functions of porter, butler, and steward, at a salary of six hundred francs. This will also be your wife's salary, for whom the remainder of the service is reserved. You will be able to devote yourself to experiments *in anima vili*, that is to say, on the stomachs of my vassals. Here is a check upon my banker for the expenses of your journey."

Giardini kissed the hand of the count, according to the Neapolitan custom.

"Excellency," said he, "I accept the check without accepting the place. I should be dishonored by abandoning my art, declining the judgment of the finest *gourmets*, who are decidedly in Paris."

When Andrea appeared at Gambara's, the latter arose and advanced to meet him.

"My generous friend," said he, with the most open air, "yesterday you abused the weakness of my faculties to make sport of me, or your brain is not more proof than mine against the vapors native to our good wines of Latium. I will hold to this last supposition, I would rather doubt your stomach than your heart. However it may be, I renounce forever the use of wine, whose abuse yesterday led me into very culpable follies. When I think that I offended—" He cast a look of terror upon Marianna.—"As to the miserable opera which you made me hear, I have thought well over it, it is nothing but music made by ordinary means, nothing but mountains of notes heaped up, *verba et voces;* it is the lees of the ambrosia which I drink in long draughts while rendering the celestial music which I hear! It is but hashed phrases whose origin I recognize. The piece *Glory to Providence!* resembles a little too much a piece of Handel's; the chorus of the knights going to the combat is a relative of the Scotch air in *La Dame Blanche;* finally, if the opera pleases so much, it is that it is everybody's music, so it must be popular. I leave you, my dear friend; since the morning, I have had ideas in my head which demand only that I should reascend toward God upon the wings of music; but I wished to see you and to speak with you. Adieu! I am going to ask pardon of the Muse. We will dine together this evening, but no wine; at least, not for me. Oh! I am resolved upon it—"

"I despair of him," said Andrea, blushing.

"Ah! you restore me my reason," cried Marianna, "I dared no longer interrogate it. My friend, my friend, it is not our fault, he will not be cured."

Six years afterward, in January, 1837, the majority of the artists who had the misfortune to spoil their wind or stringed instruments brought them to Rue Froidmanteau, to a squalid and horrible house, in which, on the fifth story, lived an old Italian, named Gambara.—For five years this artist had been left to himself and abandoned by his wife. Many misfortunes had happened to him. An instrument by which he expected to make his fortune, and which he named the *panharmonicon*, had been sold by the sheriff upon the Place du Châtelet, together with a load of ruled paper, blotted over with musical notes. On the day following the sale, these scores had enveloped, at the Halle, butter, fish, and fruits. Thus three great operas of which this poor man spoke, but which a former Neapolitan cook, now a simple huckster, said were a heap of nonsense, had been disseminated in Paris, and devoured by the baskets of retailers. No matter, the proprietor of the house had been paid his rent, and the officers their expenses.

According to the account of the old Neapolitan huckster, who sold the remains of the most sumptuous repasts served in the city, to the girls of the Rue Froidmanteau, the Signora Gambara had followed into Italy a great Milanese seigneur, and no one knew what had become of her. Worn out by fifteen years of want, she, perhaps, ruined this count by an

exorbitant luxury, for they adored each other so well that in the course of his life the Neapolitan had seen no example of a similar passion.

Toward the end of this same month of January, one evening, when Giardini the huckster was chatting with a girl who came for a supper, about this divine Marianna, so pure and so beautiful, so nobly devoted, *and who, notwithstanding, had finished like all the others*, the girl, the huckster, and his wife perceived in the street a lean woman, with a blackened and dusty face,—a nervous, walking skeleton, who was looking at the numbers and seeking to recognize a house.

"*Ecco la Marianna!*" said the huckster, in Italian. Marianna at once recognized the Neapolitan restaurateur Giardini in the poor retailer, without considering by what misfortunes he had been reduced to keeping a miserable huckster's shop. She entered, sat down, for she came from Fontainebleau; she had travelled fourteen leagues in the course of the day, and had begged her bread from Turin to Paris. She frightened this wretched trio! Of her marvellous beauty there remained but two fine eyes, sickly and lustreless. The only thing she had found faithful was misfortune. She was heartily welcomed by the old and skilful repairer of instruments, who saw her enter with an unspeakable pleasure.

"Here you are, then, my poor Marianna!" he said, with kindness. "During your absence, *they* sold my instruments and my operas."

It was difficult to kill the fatted calf on the return

of the Samaritan, but Giardini gave the remains of a salmon, the girl paid for the wine, Gambara offered his bread, the Signora Giardini laid the cloth, and these unfortunates, of such varied conditions, supped in the garret of the composer. Interrogated about her adventures, Marianna refused to answer, and merely raised her beautiful eyes to Heaven, saying in a low voice to Giardini:

"He was married to a dancer!"

"What are you going to do for a living?" said the girl.

"The journey has killed you, and—"

"And made me old," said Marianna. "No, it is not fatigue, nor misery, but sorrow."

"Ah! ah! why didn't you send something to your husband?" asked the girl.

Marianna only replied by a glance, and the girl was struck to the heart.

"She is proud, excuse me!" she said. "How will that benefit her?" she whispered to Giardini.

That year, performers took unusual care in regard to their instruments, and the repairs did not suffice to defray the expenses of this poor household; the woman no longer gained much by her needle, and the married pair were compelled to resign themselves to the necessity of employing their talents in the lowest of all spheres. Both went out in the dusk of the evening and wended their way to the Champs-Elysées to sing duets which Gambara, poor man! accompanied upon a wretched guitar. On the way, his wife, who, on

these expeditions, placed upon her head a miserable muslin veil, led her husband to a grocer's in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and made him drink a few small glasses of brandy to intoxicate him, otherwise his music would have been wretched. They placed themselves before the fashionable people seated on chairs, and one of the greatest geniuses of the time, the unknown Orpheus of modern music, executed fragments of his scores, and these pieces were so remarkable that they wrung a few sous from Parisian indolence. When a dilettante of the Bouffons, seated there by chance, did not recognize the operas from which these pieces were taken, he inquired of the woman in the garb of a Greek priestess, who held out to him a round lacquered tray in which she collected alms:

"My dear, where do you get this music?"

"From the opera of *Mahomet*," replied Marianna.

As Rossini had composed a *Mahomet II.*, the dilettante then said to the lady who accompanied him:

"What a pity that they will not give us at the Italiens the operas of Rossini with which we are unacquainted! for this, certainly, is beautiful music."

Gambara smiled.

Some days since, the paltry sum of thirty-six francs had to be paid for the rent of the garrets in which the poor resigned couple lived. The grocer had not been willing to give credit for the brandy with which the woman intoxicated her husband, in

order to make him play well. Gambara's execution was then so detestable that the ears of the rich auditors were ungrateful, and the tin tray returned empty. It was nine o'clock in the evening, a beautiful Italian, the *Principessa* Massimilla di Varèse, took pity on these poor people; she gave them forty francs and questioned them, recognizing from the thanks of the woman that she was a Venetian; the Prince Emilio requested the history of their misfortunes, and Marianna told it without any complaint against Heaven or men.

"Madame," said Gambara, in conclusion,—he was not intoxicated, "we are victims of our own superiority. My music is fine; but, when music passes from sensation to thought, it can have for auditors only people of genius, for they alone have the power to develop it. My misfortune comes from having listened to the concerts of the angels and having believed that men could comprehend them. The same thing happens to women, when, with them, love takes divine forms,—men no longer understand them."

This phrase was worth the forty francs that Massimilla had given; she also drew from her purse another gold piece, saying to Marianna that she would write to Andrea Marcosini.

"Do not write to him, madame," said Marianna, "and may God always keep you beautiful."

"Shall we take charge of them?" asked the princess of her husband, "for this man has remained faithful to the IDEAL that we have killed."

Seeing the piece of gold, old Gambara wept; then arose a reminiscence of his former scientific labors, and the poor composer, wiping his tears, uttered a phrase which the circumstance rendered touching:

"Water is a burnt body."

Paris, June 1837.

MASSIMILLA DONI

TO JACQUES STRUNZ

MY DEAR STRUNZ:

It would be ungrateful in me not to attach your name to one of the two works which I never could have written without your good-humored patience and your kind assistance. Accept this therefore, as a token of my grateful friendship, for the courage with which you tried, it may be without success, to initiate me in the profundities of musical science. At all events, you taught me what a world of obstacles and of hard tasks to be performed genius conceals in the poems which are to us the source of divine enjoyment. You have also afforded me more than once the diversion of laughing at the expense of more than one self-styled connoisseur. Some people charge me with ignorance, having no suspicion either of the sound advice for which I am indebted to one of the foremost critics of musical works, or of your painstaking assistance. Perhaps I have been the most unfaithful of secretaries. If that be so, I should certainly be unwittingly a most unreliable interpreter, and yet I desire to be able always to subscribe myself one of your friends.

DE BALZAC.

*

As all students know, the nobility of Venice is the most ancient in Europe. Its Book of Gold antedates the crusades, at which period Venice, the remnant of imperial and Christian Rome which plunged into the sea to escape the barbarians, Venice, already powerful, already illustrious, dominated the world of politics and commerce. To-day, that nobility is, with the exception of a few families, utterly ruined. Among the gondoliers who act as guides to the English, to whom history there exhibits their own future, are descendants of former doges whose families are more venerable than that of many reigning sovereigns. If you go to Venice, you will observe upon some bridge beneath which your gondola glides, a sublimely beautiful maiden, wretchedly clad, a poor child who belongs, perhaps, to one of the most illustrious of patrician families. When a race of kings has reached this state, necessarily we find some curious characters in its ranks. It is not at all strange that sparks should sometimes glow amid the cinders. These reflections, intended to justify the singularity of the characters in this tale, shall go no further, for there is nothing more unendurable than the constant repetitions of those who discourse of Venice after so many great poets and small travellers. The interest of the narrative required merely a reference to the most striking contrast in the history

of mankind: the grandeur and the misery which may be seen there in the persons of certain men and in most of the dwellings.

The nobles of Venice and of Genoa, like those of Poland in the old days, bore no titles. To be called Quirini, Doria, Brignole, Morosini, Sauli, Mocenigo, Fieschi,—Fiesque,—Cornaro, or Spinola, satisfied the most exalted pride. Corruption works in everywhere: some families are titled to-day. Nevertheless, in the days when the nobles of the aristocratic republics were equal, there was one princely title at Genoa in the Doria family, which wielded sovereign power in Amalfi, and a similar title in Venice, justified by the former possessions of Facino Cane, Prince of Varese. The Grimaldis, who became sovereigns, seized upon Monaco much later.

The last of the Canes of the elder branch disappeared from Venice thirty years before the fall of the Republic, having been convicted of crimes of disputable criminality. The family to whom this nominal principality reverted, the Cane Memmis, lapsed into indigence during the fatal period between 1796 and 1814. In the twentieth year of this century, the family was represented only by a young man named Emilio, and by a palace which is considered one of the noblest ornaments of the Grand Canal. This child of Venice the Beautiful had no other fortune than that useless palace and an income of fifteen hundred lire from a country house on the Brenta, the last remnant of all the real estate his family formerly possessed, now sold

to the Austrian government. This pittance spared Emilio the disgrace of accepting, as many nobles did, the indemnity of twenty sous a day payable to all destitute patricians by the terms of the cession to Austria.

At the beginning of the winter season, this young nobleman was still at a country house at the foot of the Tyrolese Alps, purchased during the preceding spring by Duchesse Cataneo. The house, built by Palladio for the Piepolos, consists of a square pavilion in the purest style. There is a magnificent staircase, marble porticoes on each façade, peristyles with arches covered with frescoes, and saved from any appearance of heaviness by the ultramarine ceiling with its graceful figures and decorations florid in execution, but so well proportioned that the edifice carries them as a woman carries her head-dress, with a facility which delights the eye,—in a word, the graceful stateliness of design which characterizes the *procuraties* of the Piazetta at Venice. Stuccoes of admirable patterns give to the apartments a refreshing coolness which makes the atmosphere agreeable. The outer galleries, adorned with frescoes, form screens. Everywhere we find the cool Venetian pavement where the marble is changed into unchangeable flowers. The furniture, like that of most Italian palaces, consists of a profusion of the richest silks, and of valuable pictures admirably hung; some of the Genoese priest called *Il Capucino*, several of Leonardo da Vinci, Carlo Dolci, Tintoretto, and Titian. The terraced gardens present to

the eye the marvellous results of the metamorphosis of gold, in rockwork grottoes, in fanciful arrangements of pebbles which represent, as it were, the folly of toil, in terraces built by fairies, in tiny dark-hued forests, where tall cypresses, triangular pines, and the melancholy olive-trees are skilfully mingled with oranges, laurels, and myrtles; in limpid pools where blue and red fishes swim. Whatever one may say in favor of English gardens, those umbrella-shaped trees, those clipped yews, that profusion of artistic objects so cunningly blended with the profusion of nature embellished by cultivation; those cascades with marble steps, over which the water glides timidly, like a scarf carried away by the wind, but instantly replaced; those mute statues in bronze which stand guard over silent retreats; in fine, that audacious palace, which is a landmark from all sides, as it rears its lacelike cornices at the foot of the Alps; those vivid thoughts which give life to the stone and bronze and plants, or shape themselves like flower-beds,—that poetic prodigality was a most fitting environment of the love of a duchess and a comely youth, which is a poetic work far removed from the purview of uncivilized nature.

A person of an imaginative turn of mind would have expected to see upon one of those noble staircases, beside an urn with circular bas-reliefs, a little negro with no clothing save a red skirt about his loins, holding an umbrella over the duchess's head with one hand, and with the other the long train

of her dress, while she listened to Emilio Memmi's voice. And how the Venetian would have been improved for being dressed like one of the senators painted by Titian! Alas! in that fairy palace, not unlike the palace of the *Peschiere* at Genoa, La Cataneo complied with the edicts of Victorine and the French *modistes*. She wore a muslin gown and a hat of rice-straw, dainty slippers of the color of a pigeon's breast, and thread stockings which the lightest breeze would have whisked away; over her shoulders was a black lace shawl. But something that will never be understood at Paris, where women are swathed in their gowns like a dragon-fly in its ringed epidermis, is the charming *abandon* with which this fair daughter of Tuscany wore the French costume; she had Italianized it. The Frenchwoman imparts an act of extraordinary seriousness to her skirt, whereas an Italian thinks but little about it, does not defend it with a glance of stiff formality, for she shows that she is under the protection of a single love, a passion that is serious and sacred to her and to another.

About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, having just returned from a walk, Duchesse Cataneo was reclining on a sofa near a table on which lay the débris of a dainty breakfast; she abandoned the muslin gown to the discretion of her lover, never uttering a word of warning at any movement on his part. Emilio sat in an easy-chair by her side, holding one of her hands in both of his, and gazing at her in utter oblivion of his surroundings. Do not ask if

they loved each other; they loved each other too well. They had not yet reached the stage of reading in the book, like Paul and Françoise; far from it; Emilio dared not say: *Let us read!* In the gleam of those eyes in which shone two green pupils striped by golden threads which started from the centre like the radiations from a crack in a piece of glass, and imparted to the glance the soft twinkle of a star, he felt a nervous ecstasy within, which caused a convulsive tremor. At times, he was content to see the lovely black tresses upon that adored head, bound by a plain gold circlet, escaping in glistening masses on each side of a noble brow, to listen to the throbbing in his ears caused by the hurried onrush of the blood in waves through his veins, threatening to burst the blood-vessels of his heart. By virtue of what moral phenomenon did his heart take such complete possession of his body that he no longer felt aught in himself, but everything in that woman, at the slightest word that she uttered in a voice which disturbed the sources of life within him? If a woman of moderate beauty, when constantly studied in solitude, becomes sublime and imposing, a woman so superbly beautiful as the duchess might well stupefy a young man in whom mental exaltation discovered fresh resources, for she really absorbed that youthful heart.

Massimilla Doni, heiress of the Donis of Florence, had married the Sicilian Duke Cataneo. Her mother, since deceased, had thought by that marriage to make her rich and happy in accordance with

Florentine customs. She had imagined that her daughter, who left a convent to enter life, would contract, in accordance with the laws of love, that second marriage of the heart which is everything to an Italian woman. But Massimilla Doni had acquired in the convent a strong inclination for a religious life, and when she had plighted her faith to Duke Cataneo before the altar, she was content, like a good Christian, to be his wife. But that was an impossibility. Cataneo, who simply wanted a duchess, considered it very absurd to be a husband; and when Massimilla complained of his treatment, he coolly bade her look out for a *primo cavaliere servante*, and offered his services to bring her several to select from. The duchess wept, the duke left her. Massimilla saw that people crowded about her; she was taken by her mother to Pergola, to some diplomatic houses, to the Cascines, wherever there were young and pretty gallants to be met; she found no one who pleased her, and she began to travel. She lost her mother, inherited her fortune, wore mourning for her, went to Venice, and there saw Emilio, who, as he passed her box, exchanged a curious glance with her. All was said. The Venetian felt as if he had been struck by lightning, while a voice cried: *There he is!* in the duchess's ears. Under such circumstances, two prudent and knowing individuals would have scrutinized each other, taken scent of each other; but those two ignorances blended like two substances of the same nature which become one when they meet. Massimilla soon

became a Venetian, and purchased the palace she had previously rented on the Canareggio. Then, hard pressed to devise a means of spending her income, she had purchased Rivalta also, the country house where she now was.

Emilio, being presented to La Cataneo by La Vulpato, called upon his new friend in her box at the Opéra throughout the winter, treating her with the utmost respect. Never was love more tempestuous in two hearts, or more timid in its expressions. The two children trembled in each other's presence. Massimilla did not flirt, she had no *secundo*, no *terzo*, no *panno*. Intent upon a smile, a word, she contemplated with admiration her young Venetian with the pointed face, the long, thin nose, the black eyes, and the noble brow, who, despite her ingenuous encouragement, did not go to her house until they had passed three months taming each other. The summer came with its eastern skies, the duchess lamented that she had to go alone to Rivalta. Overjoyed and at the same time disturbed in mind at the thought of the tête-à-tête, Emilio accompanied Massimilla to her country-seat. The charming couple had been there six months.

Not without poignant remorse had Massimilla, at the age of twenty, immolated her religious scruples on the altar of love; but she had slowly laid down her weapons, and she was longing to contract the marriage of the heart, so strongly urged by her mother, at the moment that Emilio held her lovely, aristocratic hand, long and white, and soft as satin,

and ending in nails beautifully formed and colored as if she had received from Asia a little of the *henna* which the sultan's women use to make their nails bright red.

A calamity of which Massimilla knew nothing, but which was a cause of cruel suffering to Emilio, had come between them in a strange way. Massimilla, although quite young, had that majesty of aspect which mythological tradition ascribes to Juno, the only goddess to whom mythology gives no lover; for even Diana, the chaste Diana, loved and was loved! Jupiter alone was able to retain his self-possession in presence of his divine better-half, upon whom many English ladies model themselves. Emilio placed his mistress on a pedestal infinitely too high for him to reach. A year later, perhaps, he would no longer be the victim of that noble disease which attacks only old men and very young men. But, as he who shoots beyond his mark is as far from hitting it as he whose arrow falls short, the duchess found herself between a husband who knew that he was so far from the mark that he had ceased to care for it, and a lover who flew beyond it so swiftly on the white wings of the angels, that he could not return. Happy in being loved, Massimilla enjoyed desire without imagining what its goal might be; while her lover, unhappy in happiness, led his young sweetheart from time to time, by a promise, to the brink of what women call the *abyss*, and found that he was obliged to pluck the flowers that grow along the brink, but could do nothing more than strip them of

their leaves, restraining in his heart a frenzy which he dared not express.

On this morning, they had walked together, repeating the hymn of love that the birds sang in their nests among the trees. On their return, the young man, whose situation can be described only by comparing him to the angels to whom painters give naught but a head and wings, was so inflamed by passion that he had expressed a doubt of the duchess's entire devotion to him, in order to lead her to say: "What proof of it do you wish?" The question was tossed at him with a queenly air, and Memmi passionately kissed the lovely, ignorant hand. Suddenly he rose, frantic with rage against himself, and left Massimilla. She maintained her careless attitude on the sofa, but she wept, wondering in what respect she, so young and lovely, failed to please Emilio. For his part, Memmi rushed about the garden, running into the trees like a hooded crow. At that moment, a servant came in search of the young Venetian, to give him a letter just arrived by a courier.

His only friend, Marco Vendramini,—a name which is also pronounced Vendramin in the Venetian dialect in which certain final letters are suppressed,—wrote to inform him that Marco Facino Cane, Prince of Varese, had died in a hospital at Paris. The proofs of his decease had arrived. Thus the Cane Memmis became Princes of Varese. As a title unaccompanied by wealth was of little value in the eyes of the two friends, Vendramin announced to Emilio, as

a much more important piece of news, the engagement at La Fenice of the famous tenor Genovese and the equally famous Signora Tinti.

Without finishing the letter, which he crumpled and thrust into his pocket, Emilio ran to tell Duchesse Cataneo the great news, entirely forgetting his inheritance of a coat of arms. The duchess knew nothing of La Tinti's strange history which aroused the interest of Italy in her behalf; the prince told it to her in a few words. The illustrious singer was a simple inn-servant, whose marvellous voice had attracted the attention of a Sicilian nobleman who happened to put up at the inn. The child's beauty—she was then twelve years old—proving to be worthy of her voice, the great nobleman's awakened interest had led him to provide for her education as Louis XV. provided for Mademoiselle de Romans in the last century. He waited patiently until Clara's voice had been trained by a famous professor, and until she was sixteen years old, before enjoying all the treasures so laboriously cultivated. When she made her début in the previous year, La Tinti had carried by storm the three Italian capitals most difficult to please.

"I am very sure that the great nobleman is not my husband," said the duchess.

The horses were ordered at once, and La Cataneo set out for Venice forthwith, in order to be present at the opening of the winter season.

*

On a lovely evening in the month of November, the new Prince of Varese passed through the Mestre lagoon, between the lines of posts painted with the Austrian colors which mark the course assigned by the customs officials to the gondolas. As he watched La Cataneo's gondola, rowed by servants in livery, which was cleaving the water a gunshot in advance, poor Emilio, whose gondolier was an old fellow who had rowed his father in the days when Venice still lived, could not repress the bitter reflections suggested by his assumption of the title.

"What a mockery of fate! To be a prince, and to have an income of fifteen hundred lire! To own one of the noblest palaces in the world, and to have no power to dispose of the marbles, the paintings, the sculpture, the staircases, which an Austrian decree has declared inalienable! To live in an edifice set on logwood piles, and worth a million, and to have no furniture! To be the possessor of superb galleries, and to occupy a chamber above the uppermost arabesque frieze, built of marble brought from the Morea, which a Memmius visited as a conqueror under the Romans! To see, in one of the most magnificent churches of Venice, one's ancestors carved in priceless marbles on their tombs, in a chapel adorned by works of Titian, Tintoretto, the two

Palmas, Bellini, and Paul Veronese, and to be unable to sell a marble Memmi to England, in order to provide the Prince of Varese with bread! Genovese, the famous tenor, will receive in one season, for his *roulades*, a sufficient sum to produce the income upon which a descendant of the Memmiuses, Roman senators, of as old a family as the Cæsars and the Syllas, could live in happiness and plenty! Genovese can smoke Indian hookahs and the Prince of Varese has to stint himself in cigars!"

He tossed his cigar end into the water. The Prince of Varese obtained his cigars from La Cataneo, at whose feet he would have liked to lay all the wealth of the world; the duchess studied all his caprices, and was overjoyed to gratify them! He had no choice but to take his only meal, his supper, with her, for all his available funds went to pay for his dress and his tickets to La Fenice. He was obliged to raise a hundred lire a year, too, for his father's old gondolier, who lived on rice in order to continue in his service for those wages. Lastly, he must also be able to pay for the cups of black coffee which he drank every morning at the Café *Florian* to sustain him until evening in a state of nervous excitement, which he relied upon as a means of death, as Vendramini relied upon opium.

"And I am a prince!"

As he spoke, Emilio Memmi threw Marco Vendramini's letter into the lagoon, without finishing it, and it floated away like a paper boat launched by a child.

"But Emilio," he continued, "is only three-and-twenty. So he is a better man than the gouty Lord Wellington, than the paralytic Regent, than the imperial family of Austria, tainted with disease, than the King of France—"

But at the thought of the King of France, Emilio's brow contracted, his ivory complexion became sallow, tears gathered in his black eyes and glistened on his long lashes; with a hand worthy the brush of Titian, he rumpled his thick, brown hair and fixed his eyes anew on La Cataneo's gondola.

"The mockery in which Fate indulges in my regard, is noticeable also in my love," he said to himself. "My heart and my imagination are overflowing with treasures, and Massimilla does not know of their existence; she is a Florentine, she will desert me. Oh! to feel this freezing sensation by her side, when her voice and her glance cause celestial sensations within me! Seeing her gondola thus, within a few yards of mine, it seems to me as if a hot iron were thrust into my heart. An invisible fluid passes through my nerves and sets them on fire, a cloud passes before my eyes, the air seems to me of the same color as at Rivalta, when the light shone through a red silk shade, and when, unseen, I gazed in admiration as she sat musing and smiling sweetly, like Leonardo's Monna Lisa. Either My Highness will end his life with a pistol-shot, or the son of the Canes will follow old Carmagnola's advice: we will turn sailors, pirates, and will amuse ourselves seeing how long we can live before we are hanged."

The prince took a fresh cigar and watched the fanciful shapes assumed by the smoke in the wind, as if he saw in its caprices an echo of his last thought. In the distance, he could already see the slender points of the Moorish decoration on the roof of his palace: he relapsed into melancholy. The duchess's gondola had disappeared in the Canareggio. The fancies of a romantic, perilous life, adopted as a fitting dénouement of his love, died away with his cigar, and his friend's gondola no longer marked his path. Thereupon he saw the present as it was: a palace without a soul, a soul without effect on the body, a principality without money, an empty body and an overflowing heart, a multitude of heart-rending antitheses. The unhappy youth mourned for his old Venice, even as Vendramini still mourned for it more bitterly than ever, for a profound mutual grief, and similarity of destiny, had given birth to a warm friendship between these two young men, the last remnants of two illustrious families. Emilio could not refrain from thinking of the days when the Memmi palace vomited light through all its windows, and was filled with music which echoed far over the waves of the Adriatic; when hundreds of gondolas were made fast to its piles; when its steps, kissed by the rippling waters, were thronged with elegant masks and dignitaries of the Republic; when its salons and its gallery were filled with an inquisitive and intriguing assemblage; when the great banquet-hall, with its joyous tables in the centre and its high circular galleries, echoing with the

strains of music, seemed to contain all Venice, going and coming over the staircases, which rang with laughter. The chisel of the most eminent artists had, from century to century, carved the bronze which then supported the long-necked or corpulent vases purchased in China, and the candelabra with innumerable branches. Every country had furnished its share of the superb decorations of the walls and ceilings. To-day, the walls, stripped of their rich hangings, and the cheerless ceilings, held their peace and wept. No Turkish carpets, no chandeliers festooned with flowers, no statues, no pictures, no merriment, and no money, that great producer of merriment! Venice, that London of the Middle Ages, was crumbling stone by stone, man by man. The dank verdure which the sea nourishes and caresses at the base of the palaces, seemed to the prince like a black fringe placed there by nature as a symbol of death. And last of all, an English poet had swooped down upon Venice like a crow upon a dead body, to caw at her in lyric poetry, in that first and last language of society, the stanzas of a *De Profundis!* English poetry thrown in the face of a city which had given birth to Italian poetry! Poor Venice!

Imagine the profound astonishment of a young man engrossed by such thoughts, when Carmagnola exclaimed:

"Serene Highness, the palace is burning, or else the old doges have returned. There are lights at the windows of the upper gallery!"

Prince Emilio thought that his dream had been made real by the touch of a magic wand. In the gathering darkness, the old gondolier was able to land his young master on the lowest step, unseen by any of the people bustling about in the palace, some of them buzzing on the stoop like bees at the entrance to a hive. Emilio glided into the vast peristyle which contained the most beautiful stairway in Venice, and ascended it slowly, in order to ascertain the cause of this strange state of affairs. A whole world of mechanics were making all haste to complete the furnishing and decoration of the palace. The first floor, worthy of the ancient reputation of Venice, offered to Emilio's gaze the beautiful things of which he had been dreaming a moment before, and the fairy had arranged them with the most excellent taste. Even in the most trifling details was displayed a magnificence befitting a king's palace. Emilio walked about without attracting the slightest observation, and he proceeded from surprise to surprise. Curious to see what was taking place on the second floor, he went up, and found that there the furnishing was completed. The unknown genii employed by the enchanter to reproduce the marvels of the *Thousand and One Nights* in favor of a poor Italian prince were replacing some shabby articles of furniture which had been provided originally.

Prince Emilio came at last to the sleeping apartment of the second-floor suite, which smiled upon him like a shell from which Venus had just emerged. It was so daintily lovely, so prettily decorated, so

coquettish, so replete with exquisite refinement, that he threw himself into an easy-chair of gilded wood beside a table on which the most toothsome of cold suppers was served; and without further ceremony, he began to eat.

"I can think of nobody in the whole world but Massimilla who can have conceived the idea of this surprise. She must have found out that I am a prince; perhaps Duc Cataneo is dead and has left her his property; in that case, she is twice as rich as before, she will marry me, and—"

Whereupon he ate in a way to earn the hatred of any dyspeptic millionaire who might have chanced to see him devouring that supper, and he drank oceans of an excellent port wine.

"Now I can understand the significant air with which she said: 'Until this evening!' Perhaps she will come and disenchant me. What a beautiful bed! and what a pretty lantern in the bed! Pshaw! a Florentine fairy!"

There are some richly-endowed organizations upon which extreme happiness or unhappiness has a soporific effect. Now, upon a young man whose imagination was powerful enough to idealize a mistress so completely that she no longer seemed to him a mere woman, the too sudden arrival of good fortune was certain to act like a dose of opium. When the prince had finished the bottle of port, eaten half a fish and a portion of a French pâté, he felt a most violent inclination to retire. Perhaps he was doubly intoxicated. He removed the coverlet with his own

hands, and prepared the bed, undressed in a charming little dressing-room, and went to bed to reflect upon his destiny.

"I have forgotten poor Carmagnola," he said to himself; "but my cook and my butler will attend to him."

At that moment, a lady's-maid tripped lightly into the room, humming an air from the *Barber of Seville*. She threw upon a chair an armful of female garments, a complete costume for the night, exclaiming:

"They are coming in!"

And, in very truth, a few moments later a young woman appeared, dressed in the French fashion, who might have been taken for the original of some fanciful English drawing designed for a *Forget-me-not, une belle assemblée*, or a *Book of Beauty*. The prince quivered with alarm and pleasure, for he loved Massimilla, as you know. Now, despite the loyal love which glowed in his veins, and which formerly inspired the pictures of Spain, the Madonnas of Italy, the statues of Michael Angelo, and Ghiberti's doors to the Baptistery, lust enveloped him in its meshes and desire excited him, but did not overspread his heart with that warm ethereal essence which a glance or the lightest word from La Cataneo infused therein. His mind, his heart, his reason, his whole will, cried out at the thought of infidelity; but brutal and capricious infidelity overpowered them all.

The woman was not alone. The prince saw one of those personages in whose existence no one is willing to believe when they are transferred from

the state of reality, in which we contemplate them in wondering admiration, to the fanciful state of a description of more or less literary excellence. The stranger's costume, like that of the Neapolitans, was of five colors, if we may count the black of the hat a color: his breeches were olive, his red waistcoat glittered with gilt buttons, his coat was of a greenish hue, and his linen was very nearly yellow. He seemed to have taken it upon himself to prove the authenticity of the Neapolitan whom Gerolamo always introduces on the stage of his marionette theatre. His eyes seemed to be of glass. The nose, like an ace of clubs in shape, was unpleasantly prominent; it overshadowed, however, for modesty's sake, a hole which it would be insulting to mankind to call a mouth, in which could be seen three or four white tusks endowed with movement, which changed their positions at will. The ears bent beneath their own weight, and caused a curious resemblance to a dog. The complexion, which was supposed to show the effect of the infusion of several metals into the blood by order of some Hippocrates, was not far from black. The brow, pointed in shape and partially hidden by thin, straight hair, which fell over his temples like threads of blown glass, crowned with reddish blotches a countenance far from prepossessing. Although only of medium height and thin, this gentleman had very long arms and broad shoulders. Despite these unattractive details, and although you would have said that he was seventy years of age, he did not lack a certain cyclopean majesty; his

manners were aristocratic, and in his glance there was the self-assured expression of the man of wealth. Whoever had sufficient courage to observe him carefully could read his history written by the passions in that noble clay now mixed with mud. You could detect the great nobleman who had been possessed of great wealth from his earliest youth, and had sold his body to debauchery for the exorbitant pleasures it afforded him. Debauchery had destroyed the human creature, and had made of it another for its own use. Tens of thousands of bottles had passed beneath the empurpled arches of that grotesque nose, leaving their dregs on his lips. The long and fatiguing processes of digestion had carried away his teeth. His eyes had lost their fire in the glare of the gaming table. The blood had become laden with impure elements which had deranged the nervous system. The working of the digestive forces had absorbed the intelligence. And, lastly, love had destroyed the young man's glossy and abundant hair. Each vice, like a greedy heir, had branded its portion of the still living corpse. If we watch nature carefully, we discover therein ironical jests of a superior sort: for instance, it places toadstools beside flowers, as that duke was placed beside that rose of love.

"Will you play the violin to-night, my dear duke?" said the young woman, releasing the cord and letting fall a magnificent portière over the doorway.

"Play the violin!" said Emilio to himself, "what

does she mean? What has been done with my palace? Am I awake? Here I am in this woman's bed, who seems to think she is at home— She is taking off her cape! Have I been smoking opium, like Vendramin, and am I in the midst of one of the dreams in which he sees Venice as it was three hundred years ago?"

Seated in front of her toilet-table, in the candle-light, the stranger began to lay aside her clothes with the most tranquil air imaginable.

"Ring for Julia, I am in a hurry to undress."

At that moment, the duke's eye fell upon the partly-consumed supper; he looked about the room and spied the prince's breeches stretched out on a chair beside the bed.

"I will not ring, Clarina!" he cried, shrilly, in a towering rage. "I will not play the violin to-night or to-morrow, or ever again."

"Ta ta ta ta!" sang Clarina on the same note, jumping from octave to octave with the ease of the nightingale.

"For all that voice of yours, which would make Santa Clara, your patron, jealous, you are altogether too impudent, madame hussy!"

"You did not bring me up to hear such words!" she said, proudly.

"Did I bring you up to keep a man in your bed? You deserve neither benefactions nor hatred from me."

"A man in my bed!" cried Clarina, turning hastily in that direction.

"And a man who has coolly eaten our supper, as if he were at home," added the duke.

"Why, am I not in my own home?" cried Emilio. "I am the Prince of Varese, and this palace is mine."

As he spoke, Emilio sat up and revealed his noble and handsome Venetian face amid the luxurious draperies of the bed. Instantly, Clarina began to laugh, the insane laughter which seizes young women when something irresistibly comical and utterly unexpected happens to them. But her laughter came to an end when she looked more closely at the young man, who, let us observe, was remarkably handsome although slightly clothed; the same passion which was gnawing at Emilio attacked her, and as she was in love with no one, there was nothing to restrain, in her case, the fancy of an amorous Sicilian.

"Although this is the Memmi palace, Your Serene Highness will have the kindness to leave it none the less," said the duke, assuming the cold and ironical air of a polished man of the world. "I am in my own house—"

"Remember, monsieur le duc, that you are in my apartment, and not in your own house," said Clarina, rousing herself from her lethargy. "If you entertain any suspicions of my virtue, I beg you to leave me the benefits of my crime—"

"Suspicions! Say certainty, my love."

"I swear to you," rejoined Clarina, "that I am innocent."

"But what do I see in yonder bed?" said the duke.

"Ah! you old villain, if you believe what you see rather than what I tell you, you no longer love me!" cried Clarina. "Off with you, and don't make my ears ache any more! Do you hear me? Go, monsieur le duc! This young prince will repay you the million I have cost you, if you insist upon it."

"I will repay nothing," said Emilio in an undertone.

"But there's nothing to repay; a million's little enough for the privilege of having Clarina Tinti, when a man's so ugly as you are. Go, I tell you," she said to the duke, "you have dismissed me and I dismiss you, so we are quits."

At a gesture from the old duke, who seemed inclined to resist this order, uttered in an attitude worthy of the rôle of Semiramide, to which La Tinti owed her great reputation, the prima-donna rushed at the old monkey and pushed him through the door.

"If you do not leave me at peace—*tranquille*—tonight, we shall never meet again. My *never* means more than yours," she said.

"*Tranquille!*" retorted the duke, laughing bitterly; "I should say, my dear idol, that I leave you decidedly *agitata*."

He left the room. This cowardly behavior did not surprise Emilio. All those who have accustomed themselves to some particular flavor, selected from among all the effects of love, and which accords with their nature, are aware that no consideration checks

a man whose passion has become a habit. La Tinti leaped like a fawn from the door to the bed.

"A prince, poor, young, and handsome! why, it's a real fairy-tale!" she said.

She seated herself on the bed with a grace which recalled the artless unconstraint of the animal, the unconscious movement of the plant toward the sun, or the graceful waltz movement of twigs in the wind.

Loosening the wristbands of her dress, she began to sing, not with the voice which evoked applause at La Fenice, but with a voice made tremulous by desire. Her song was like a breeze which wafted to the heart the caresses of love. She glanced furtively at Emilio, who was no less embarrassed than she; for this actress had lost the audacity which enlivened her eyes, her gestures, and her voice when she dismissed the duke; no, she was as humble as the amorous courtesan. To form a just conception of La Tinti, one must have seen one of the best of French actresses at her début in *Il Fazzoletto*, an opera by Garcia produced about this time at the Italiens on Rue Louvois; she was so lovely that a poor *garde du corps*, who had failed to gain her ear, killed himself in despair. The prima-donna of La Fenice had the same refinement of expression, the same graceful figure, the same youth; but in her there was an abundance of the warm Sicilian coloring which gave a golden tinge to her beauty; her voice, too, was richer; and, finally, she had that majestic aspect which is the distinguishing characteristic of an Italian woman's figure. La Tinti,

whose name so closely resembles that which the French singer manufactured for herself, was seventeen years of age, and the poor prince was twenty-three. What jocose hand had amused itself by thus placing fire in such close proximity to powder? A perfumed chamber, hung with bright red curtains, brilliant with candles, a lace-trimmed bed, a silent palace, Venice! two young people, both beautiful! all forms of luxury united.

Emilio seized his breeches, leaped out of bed, rushed into the dressing-room, dressed himself, came out, and hurried toward the door.

This is what he said to himself as he was putting on his clothes:

"Massimilla, dear daughter of the Donis, in whom the beauty of Italy is a hereditary treasure, thou who dost not belie the promise of the portrait of Margherita, one of the few canvases painted entirely by Raphael for his renown! my lovely and saintly mistress, shall I not better deserve thee by flying from this flower-strewn abyss? Should I be worthy of thee if I profaned a heart that is wholly thine? No, I will not fall into the vulgar trap set for me by my rebellious senses. Let this girl keep her duke, and I my duchess!"

As he raised the portière, he heard a moan. The heroic lover turned and saw La Tinti lying with her face buried in the bed, stifling her sobs. Will you believe it? The singer was lovelier on her knees, with her face hidden, than in her former embarrassment when her face was glowing. Her hair unloosed

and falling over her shoulders, her Magdalen-like pose, the disorder of her torn garments, all had been arranged by the devil, who, as you know, is a great colorist. The prince took poor Clarina by the waist, but she glided from his grasp like a snake and twined herself about one of his feet, against which he felt the soft pressure of her lovely flesh.

"Will you explain to me," he said, shaking his foot to withdraw it from the girl's embrace, "how you happen to be in my palace? how poor Emilio Memmi—"

"Emilio Memmi!" cried La Tinti, rising; "you said that you were a prince—"

"A prince since yesterday."

"You love La Cataneo!" said La Tinti, eyeing him from head to foot.

Emilio did not reply, seeing the prima-donna smile amid her tears.

"Your Highness does not know that the man who gave me my education for the stage, that this duke—is Cataneo himself; and your friend Vendramin, believing that he was acting in your interest, let this palace to him for the term of my engagement at La Fenice, for a thousand crowns. Dear idol of my desire," she said, taking his hand and drawing him toward her, "why do you avoid her for whom many men would submit to have their bones broken? Love, you see, will always be love. It is always the same, it is the sun of our hearts, as it were, we warm ourselves wherever it shines, and at this moment it is high noon. If you are not content

to-morrow, kill me! But I shall live on, I tell you, for I am outrageously lovely."

Emilio determined to remain. When he had consented by a nod of his head, La Tinti's thrill of joy seemed to him to be illumined by a bright light from hell. Never had love assumed such an imposing aspect in his eyes.

At that moment, Carmagnola whistled vigorously.

"What can he want of me?" said the prince to himself.

Vanquished by love, Emilio paid no heed to Carmagnola's repeated whistling.

If you have not travelled in Switzerland, you will perhaps take pleasure in reading this description, and, if you have climbed the lofty mountains of that country, you will not recall unmoved their precipitous slopes. In that sublime region, in the bosom of a huge cliff cleft by a valley,—a sunken path as broad as Avenue de Neuilly at Paris, but several hundred fathoms deep and bristling with ravines,—there is a water-course, coming from the Saint-Gothard, the Simplon, or some Alpine peak or other, which falls into a vast well, how many fathoms deep I know not, but several fathoms long and wide, bordered by huge blocks of jagged granite upon which are green fields, while giant firs and alders rear their heads between them, and strawberries and violets grow all about; sometimes you pass a châlet, at the window of which appears the rosy face of a fair-haired Swiss maiden; the water in this well is blue or green, according to the aspect of the heavens, but its blue

is the blue of the sapphire, its green that of the emerald; and nothing on earth represents so perfectly to the most heedless traveller, the most indefatigable diplomat, the most easy-going shopkeeper, the ideas of depth, calmness, immensity, divine love, and eternal happiness, as this liquid diamond, where the snow, rushing from the lofty Alps, flows in the form of limpid water through a natural canal, concealed beneath the trees, hollowed out of the rock, whence it emerges through a cleft, without a sound; the stream, flowing directly over the abyss, glides so gently that you can detect no disturbance on its surface in which the carriage is reflected as you pass. Now the horses receive two blows of the whip! you turn the corner of a cliff and drive across a bridge: instantly there arises the deafening roar of many waterfalls rushing madly upon one another; the torrent, escaping with a furious bound, breaks into a score of cascades, falls, and is shattered upon a thousand jagged rocks; it rushes in innumerable sparkling sheaves of foam over a boulder that has fallen from the summit of the ridge that overhangs the valley, into the very centre of the road which water, the most venerable of all living forces, has imperiously hewed out for itself.

If you have grasped the salient features of this landscape, you will recognize in the placid stream an image of Emilio's love for the duchess, and in the cascades leaping from rock to rock like a flock of sheep an image of his night of love with La Tinti. Amid these torrents of love, there rose a rock against

which the flood broke. The prince was like Sisyphus, always under the rock.

"What is it that Duke Cataneo does with his violin?" he said to himself; "am I indebted to him for this symphony?"

He broached the subject to Clara Tinti.

"Dear child"—she had discovered that the prince was a child—"dear child," she said, "this man, who is a hundred and eighteen years old on the registers of Vice, and forty-seven according to the records of the Church, has but one last means of enjoyment on earth which is capable of arousing in him a sense of life. Yes, all the chords are broken, everything is a ruin or a tattered rag; the mind, the intelligence, the heart, the nerves, all that produces an impulse in man and gives him a glimpse of heaven through desire or the fire of pleasure, depends not so much upon music as upon one of the innumerable effects of music, a perfect harmony between two voices, or between one voice and the first string of his violin. The old monkey sits on my knee and takes his violin; he plays well enough, he produces sounds with it; I try to imitate them, and when the longed-for moment arrives, and it is impossible to distinguish the note of the violin from the note that issues from my windpipe, then the old fellow is in an ecstasy, his dead eyes emit their last flames, he is deliriously happy, and rolls on the floor like a drunken man. That is why he pays Genovese so handsomely. Genovese is the only tenor whose voice sometimes coincides exactly with mine. Either we do really

approach that point once or twice in an evening, or the duke imagines it; and for this imaginary pleasure he has engaged Genovese; Genovese belongs to him. No theatrical manager can engage the tenor to sing without me, or me without him. The duke educated me to gratify this whim, and I owe to him my talent, my beauty, and doubtless my fortune. He will die in some spasm caused by a perfect accord. The sense of hearing is the only one that has survived in the shipwreck of his faculties, that is the thread by which he clings to life. The decayed stump puts forth a vigorous shoot. There are many men in that condition, so I am told; may the Madonna protect them! But you're not one of that sort! You can do whatever you choose and whatever I choose, I am sure."

*

Toward morning, Prince Emilio stole softly from the room and found Carmagnola lying across the doorway.

"Highness," said the gondolier, "the duchess commanded me to give you this note."

He handed his master a dainty little paper folded in a triangle. The prince felt that his senses were failing him; he returned to the room and sank upon a couch, for his sight was troubled and his hands trembled as he read:

"DEAR EMILIO:

"Your gondola stopped at your palace; do you not know that Cataneo has hired it for La Tinti? If you love me, go this very evening to Vendramin, who tells me that he has arranged a room for you in his house. What am I to do? Must I remain at Venice to be confronted by my husband and his singer? Shall we return together to Frioul? Answer me with a word, were it only to tell me what letter it was that you threw into the canal.

"MASSIMILLA DONI."

The writing and the perfume of the paper awoke a thousand memories in the young Venetian's heart. The sun of his only love cast its bright gleam upon the blue wave which had come from afar, collected from the bottomless deeps, and which sparkled like a star. The noble youth could not restrain the tears which gushed from his eyes in streams; for in the

languor caused by his sated passions he was without strength against the touch of that spotless divinity. Clarina heard his sobs in her sleep; she sat up in bed, saw her prince in a grief-stricken attitude, and threw herself at his knees and kissed them.

"She is still awaiting a reply," said Carmagnola, raising the portière.

"Infamous wretch, you have ruined me!" cried Emilio, rising, and spurning La Tinti with his foot.

She embraced him so passionately, imploring an explanation by a glance, the glance of a weeping Samaritan, that Emilio, frantic at finding himself still entangled in the passion which had caused his degradation, repulsed the singer with a brutal kick.

"You told me to kill you—die, poisonous beast!" he shouted.

Then he rushed from the palace, and leaped into his gondola.

"Row!" he cried to Carmagnola.

"Where?" asked the old man.

"Wherever you choose."

The gondolier divined his master's meaning, and guided his craft, by innumerable détours, to the Canareggio, before the door of a marvellously beautiful palace, which you will admire when you go to Venice; for no stranger ever failed to order his gondola to pause at sight of those windows all differently decorated, each more fanciful than the others, with balconies of ironwork carved like the most ethereal laces; at sight of the corners of the palace,

terminating in tall, slender, twisted columns; at sight of the courses of stone, carved by a chisel so capricious that one can find no figure repeated in all the arabesques. How pretty the door is, and how mysterious the long arched passage which leads to the staircase! And who could fail to admire those steps, whereon intelligent art has laid, in anticipation of the time when Venice will live again, a carpet as rich as a Turkey carpet, but consisting of stones of innumerable shapes, inlaid in white marble! You will be charmed by the fascinating fanciful designs of the decoration of the arches, which are gilded like those in the ducal palace, and which glide away above you, so that the marvels of art are under your feet and over your head. What soothing shadows, what silence, what refreshing coolness! But what solemnity, too, in that old palace, where, to please Emilio, as well as his friend Vendramin, the duchess had collected much old Venetian furniture, and where skilful hands had restored the ceilings! There Venice lived anew. Not only was the magnificence there displayed noble and imposing, it was instructive too. The archæologist would have found there typical examples of the beautiful as produced in the Middle Ages, which went to Venice for their patterns. There one could see the first board ceilings covered with flower designs in gold on a colored background, or in colors on a gold background, and the ceilings of gilded stucco in which there was a scene with several characters in each corner and the loveliest frescoes in the centre: a

style so ruinously extravagant that the Louvre possesses but two, and the magnificence of Louis XIV. took fright at the thought of such a lavish outlay for Versailles. On all sides were objects of great value into whose composition entered marble, wood, or rich fabrics.

Emilio opened a carved oaken door, crossed the long gallery which runs from end to end of the palaces in Venice on each floor, and reached another well-known door which made his heart beat fast. On his appearance, the duchess's companion came forth from a vast salon and ushered him into a study, where he found the duchess on her knees before a Madonna. He had come to confess and ask forgiveness. The sight of Massimilla praying transformed him. He and God, naught else, in that heart! The duchess rose unaffectedly, and offered her hand to her lover, who did not take it.

"Pray, did not Gianbattista find you yesterday?" she said.

"No," was his reply.

"That ill-luck caused me to pass a cruel night! I was so afraid that you would meet the duke, whose perverse character I know so well! What an idea of Vendramin's to let your palace to him!"

"An excellent idea, Milla, for your prince is far from rich."

Massimilla was so beautiful in her confidence, so magnificent in her beauty, so soothed by Emilio's presence, that, at that moment, Emilio, wide awake as he was, felt the sensations of the painful dream

which torments all vivid imaginations: the dream in which, after arriving at a ball attended by many handsomely-dressed women, the dreamer suddenly finds that he is naked, without even a shirt; shame and fear scourge him in turn, and not until he wakes is he freed from his agony. Emilio's mind was in that condition in his mistress's presence. Hitherto it had been clad in the fairest flowers of sentiment; lust had reduced it to an ignoble plight, and he alone knew it; for the lovely Florentine attributed so much virtue to her love, that the man whom she loved must be incapable of incurring the slightest stain. As Emilio had not accepted her hand, the duchess rose and ran her fingers through the hair La Tinti had kissed. Thereupon she felt that Emilio's hand was moist, and that his forehead was wet with perspiration.

"What is the matter?" she asked in a voice to which affection gave the softness of a flute.

"Never until this moment have I realized the depth of my love," Emilio replied.

"Well, dear idol, what is your will?" said she.

At these words, all of Emilio's blood flowed back into his heart.

"What have I done to lead her to that phrase?" he thought.

"What letter was that you threw into the lagoon, Emilio?"

"Vendramin's, which I had not finished; if I had, I should not have met the duke in my palace, for the letter undoubtedly told me of the lease."

Massimilla turned pale, but was reassured by a gesture from Emilio.

"Stay with me all day; we will go to the theatre together; let us not go to Frioul, your presence will help me to endure Cataneo's," said Massimilla.

Although it was sure to be a season of unremitting mental torture for the lover, he consented with apparent delight. If anything can convey an idea of what the damned feel when they find how unworthy they are of God's indulgence, is it not the plight of a young man still pure at heart, in presence of a revered mistress, when he has upon his lips the taste of an act of infidelity, when he brings into the sanctuary of his beloved divinity the poisoned atmosphere of a courtesan? Baader, who in his lessons explained celestial things by erotic comparisons, had doubtless noticed, with the Catholic writers, the great resemblance between human love and the love of Heaven. His suffering from this source cast a tinge of melancholy upon the pleasure of the Venetian in being with his mistress. A woman's heart possesses an incredible aptitude for bringing itself into harmony with her sentiments; she assumes her lover's colors, she vibrates with the note a lover strikes; therefore the duchess became thoughtful. The irritating appetite kindled by the salt of coquetry is very far from spurring love onward so vigorously as this sweet conformity of emotions. The efforts of coquetry point too clearly to a separation, and a separation, even though but momentary, is not pleasing; whereas this sympathetic

sharing of emotions denotes the constant fusion of two hearts. Thus poor Emilio was moved by the silent divination which caused the duchess to weep over an unknown offence. Feeling stronger when she saw that she was not attacked on the sensual side of love, the duchess could venture to be caressing; she laid bare her angelic mind boldly and with confidence, just as the passionate La Tinti during that diabolical night had displayed her body with its rounded outlines, its firm, pliant flesh. In Emilio's eyes, there was a sort of duel between the holy love of this snow-white soul and the love of the nervous and excitable Sicilian.

Thus the day passed in long, searching glances exchanged after profound reflections. Each of them sounded the depth of his own affection, and found it infinite—hence a feeling of security which suggested tender words.

Modesty, that divinity which, in a moment of heedless trifling with Love, gave birth to Coquetry, need not have placed her hand over her eyes at sight of these two lovers. Their self-indulgence, their pleasure, went no further than this: Massimilla held Emilio's head upon her breast, and ventured now and then to press her lips upon his, but as a bird dips its beak in the pure water of a spring, looking timidly about to see if it is observed. Their thoughts developed that kiss, as a musician develops a theme by the countless methods of music, and it produced within them tumultuous, echoing waves of sound, which set their blood on fire. Certain it is that the

idea will always surpass the fact; otherwise desire would fall short of pleasure, and it is, in fact, more powerful, it engenders it. Thus they were entirely happy, for enjoyment of happiness will always diminish happiness. Married only in heaven, these two lovers admired each other in the purest of all forms, that of two hearts enkindled and joined together in the divine light, a radiant spectacle to the eyes which faith has touched, especially fertile in such boundless joys as the brush of the Raphaels, the Titians, the Murillos has succeeded in depicting, such joys as those who have known them feel anew at sight of the works of those artists. The grosser forms of pleasure, which the Sicilian woman lavished so generously,—a material proof of this angelic union,—should surely be despised by superior minds, should they not?

These noble thoughts passed through the prince's mind as he lay in a sort of divine languor on Massimilla's cool, white, yielding breast, beneath the warm rays of her eyes with their long, glistening lashes, and he lost himself in the infinite expanse of that libertinage of the imagination. At such moments, Massimilla became one of those celestial virgins of whom we catch glimpses in dreams, who disappear at cock-crow, but whom we recognize in their luminous spheres in certain works of the glorious painters of the heavens.

In the evening, the lovers went to the theatre. So goes life in Italy: love in the morning, music in the evening, sleep at night. How vastly preferable such

a life is to that of the countries where people employ all their lungs and all their strength in political intriguing, with no more power to change the course of affairs by themselves than a grain of sand has to make a cloud of dust. In those strange countries, liberty consists in disputing over public affairs, in looking out for one's self, in wasting one's strength in innumerable public employments, each more idiotic than the rest in that they all mark a departure from the noble and sacred egotism which gives birth to all great human achievements. At Venice, on the other hand, love and its innumerable threads, a soothing absorption in genuine enjoyment, takes possession of the time and encompasses it. In that country, love is so natural a thing that the duchess was looked upon as an extraordinary woman, for everyone had an abiding conviction of her chastity, despite the violence of Emilio's passion. Wherefore the women sincerely pitied the poor young man who was considered to be the victim of the sanctity of his beloved.

But no one dared blame the duchess; for in Italy religion is a power as deeply venerated as love.

Every evening at the theatre the lorgnettes were levelled at La Cataneo's box first of all, and every woman said to her escort, indicating the duchess and her lover:

"At what stage have they arrived?"

The escort would scrutinize Emilio, seek some indications of happiness on his face, and find naught save the expression of a pure and melancholy love.

Thereupon the men would say to the women, as they visited one box after another:

"La Cataneo is not Emilio's as yet."

"She is making a mistake," the old women would reply, "she will tire him out."

Forse! was the favorite retort of the younger women, with the solemn air which Italians assume when they use that impressive word, which means a great many things.

Some women would lose their patience, declare that it was a bad precedent, and that it showed a misapprehension of religion to allow it to stifle love.

"You should love Emilio, my dear," said La Vulpato to the duchess, happening to meet her on the stairway at the close of the performance.

"Why, I do love him with all my strength," she replied.

"Then why doesn't he look happier?"

The duchess replied with a slight movement of her shoulders.

Here in France, under the influence of the constantly increasing mania for English manners and customs, we cannot form an idea of the seriousness with which Venetian society conducts an investigation of this sort. Vendramin alone knew Emilio's secret, a secret well kept by two men who had joined their crests, placing above them the words: *Non amici, fratres.*

The opening of a season is an important event in Venice as in all the other Italian capitals; so that La Fenice was full to overflowing that evening. The

five evening hours passed at the theatre play so great a part in Italian life, that it will not be amiss to explain the customs arising from this method of employing the time.

In Italy, the boxes differ from those in other countries, in this respect, that elsewhere women wish to be seen, while the Italian women care but little about putting themselves on exhibition. The boxes are oblong, running diagonally with respect to the stage and the corridor alike. At the right and left are couches, and at the end of each couch an easy-chair, one for the mistress of the box, the other for her female companion, when she has one. Such is rarely the case. Every woman is too much occupied in her own box to pay visits or to care to receive them; nor do they care to set up a rival to themselves. Thus an Italian woman almost always reigns alone in her box; there, mothers are not their daughters' slaves, daughters are not embarrassed by their mothers; in short, the women have with them neither children nor parents to censure them, spy upon them, bore them, or mingle in their conversations. The front of all the boxes is draped in silk of the same color and in the same style. From this drapery hang curtains of the same color, which are kept drawn when the family to whom the box belongs is in mourning. With few exceptions, and those at Milan, the boxes are not lighted inside; they obtain their light from the stage, or from a by no means brilliant chandelier which, despite vehement protests, some cities have allowed to be placed

in the house; but, thanks to the curtains, the boxes are still quite dark, and, owing to the way in which they are arranged, the shadows are so deep at the rear that it is very difficult to see what is going on there. These boxes, which are large enough to hold eight or ten persons, are hung with rich silks, the ceilings are prettily painted and brightened by the use of light colors, and the woodwork is gilded. Ices and sherbets are served to the occupants, or they nibble at sweetmeats, for only the middle classes continue the old practice of dining at the theatre. Each box is a parcel of real estate of considerable value; they are worth about thirty thousand lire; the Litta family, at Milan, own three adjoining ones.

These facts will serve to show the great importance attached to this detail of a life of leisure. Conversation is absolute monarch in these enclosures, which one of the most ingenious writers of our day, and one of those who have studied Italy most carefully, Stendhal, calls small salons with windows looking on the *parterre*.* In fact, music and scenic illusions are purely accessories; the absorbing interest attaches to the conversations that are carried on, to the great petty affairs of the heart which are discussed, to the appointments which are made, to the gossip and remarks which are exchanged. The theatre is an inexpensive gathering of a whole society, scrutinizing itself and amusing itself with its own failings.

* *Parterre* has the double meaning of pit—in a theatre—and flower-garden.

The men who are admitted to the box take their places one after another, in the order of their arrival, on one or the other sofa. The first comer naturally seats himself next the mistress of the box; but when both sofas are occupied, if a third visitor arrives, the one who came first breaks off the conversation, rises, and takes his leave. Thereupon each one goes forward a place until he in turn reaches the seat of honor by his sovereign. This aimless chatter, these serious conversations, this airy persiflage of Italian life, could not go on without a general absence of constraint. For instance, the women may appear in full dress or not, as they choose; they are so entirely at home, that a stranger who is admitted to their box is at liberty to call at their house on the following day. The traveller finds it difficult to comprehend at first this life of intelligent idleness, this *dolce far niente* embellished with music. Only a long sojourn in Italy, and a faculty of keen observation, will reveal to a stranger the meaning of Italian life, which resembles the pure sky of the country, and which the wealthy seek to preserve unclouded. The nobleman gives little thought to the management of his fortune; he leaves the administration of his property to intendants,—*ragionati*,—who rob him and ruin him; his life is devoid of the political element, which would soon become a bore to him; and so he lives solely by passion and with passion, his hours are well filled. Hence the need which lovers feel of being always together in order to satisfy each other, or to assure their hold upon each other; for the

great secret of this life lies in the fact that the lover is for five hours in the evening under the eyes of the woman with whom he has passed the morning. Italian customs, therefore, demand constant enjoyment, and involve a study of the probable means of keeping it alive, yet hidden beneath apparent indifference. It is a delightful life, but a costly one, for in no other country do we meet so many debilitated men.

The duchess's box was on the ground-floor, which is called *pepiano* in Venice; she always seated herself in such a position that the light from the footlights fell upon her, and her lovely head stood clearly forth in the soft light against the shadows behind her. The Florentine attracted the eye by her noble snow-white brow crowned by the coils of black hair which gave her a truly regal bearing; by the refinement of her features, which recalled the sweet dignity of Andrea del Sarto's faces; by the shape of her face, and the circle of her eyes; and by those velvet eyes themselves, which communicated the charm of the woman dreaming of happiness, still pure in love, at once majestic and lovely.

Instead of *Moses*, in which La Tinti was to have made her début with Genovese, they gave *Il Barbiere*, in which the tenor sang without the famous prima-donna. The impresario had announced that he was compelled to change the programme because of La Tinti's indisposition, and it was a fact that Duke Cataneo did not come to the theatre. Was it an adroit scheme on the impresario's part to obtain

two full houses by having Genovese and Clarina make their débuts separately, or was La Tinti's alleged indisposition genuine? As to this question, which the pit was justified in discussing, Emilio could have little doubt; but although the news of her illness caused him some remorse when he remembered her beauty and his own brutality, her absence and the duke's made the prince and the duchess alike tranquil in their minds. Moreover, Genovese sang in a fashion to dispel the nocturnal memories of impure love and to prolong the heavenly joys of that delightful day. Overjoyed to have all the applause to himself, the tenor displayed all the marvellous resources of that talent which subsequently achieved a European reputation. Genovese, at this time twenty-three years of age, a native of Bergamo and a pupil of Veluti, passionately enamored of his art, with a good figure and an attractive face, and quick to grasp the spirit of his rôles, already gave promise of the great artist, destined to acquire renown and great wealth. He won an insane triumph, an adjective that can justifiably be used in Italy alone, where there is an indescribable touch of frenzy in the gratitude of the pit to anyone who affords it pleasure.

Some of the prince's friends came to congratulate him on his inheritance and to retail the news of the day. On the preceding evening, Duke Cataneo had taken La Tinti to a party given by La Vulpato, where she had sung, and where her health had seemed to be as good as her voice was beautiful; thus her

improvised illness caused much earnest discussion. According to the reports in circulation at the Café Florian, Genovese was madly in love with La Tinti; La Tinti wished to avoid his declarations of love, and the manager had been unable to induce them to appear together. According to the Austrian general, the duke was ill, La Tinti was nursing him, and Genovese was entrusted with the duty of consoling the pit. The duchess was indebted for the general's visit to the arrival of a French physician whom he wished to introduce to her.

The prince, noticing Vendramin prowling about the pit, left the box to enjoy a confidential conversation with his friend, whom he had not seen for three months; and as they walked back and forth in the space always found between the pit benches and ground-floor boxes of Italian theatres, he was able to observe the duchess's greeting of the stranger.

"Who is that Frenchman?" he asked Vendramin.

"A doctor whom Cataneo summoned by letter; he wants to know how much longer he can hope to live. The Frenchman is waiting for Malfatti, with whom he is to have a consultation."

Like all Italian women who are in love, the duchess did not once remove her eyes from Emilio; for, in that country, a woman's self-abandonment is so absolute that it is very hard to detect an expressive glance turned in any other direction than toward its source.

"*Caro,*" said the prince to Vendramin, "remember that I slept at your house last night."

"Have you conquered?" asked Vendramin, putting his arm about his friend's waist.

"No," Emilio replied, "but I believe that I may be happy with Massimilla some day."

"In that case," rejoined Marco, "you will be the most enviable man in the world. The duchess is the most accomplished woman in Italy. To me, who see earthly things through the glowing vapors of intoxication by opium, she appears as the loftiest expression of art, for nature has unwittingly produced in her a portrait by Raphael. Your passion is not displeasing to Cataneo, who counted down the full thousand crowns, which I have for you."

"And so," said Emilio, "whatever anyone may say, I sleep at your house every night. Come, for a minute apart from her, when I can be with her, is perfect torture."

Emilio took his place at the back of the box, and sat silent in his corner, listening to the duchess, enjoying her wit and her beauty. It was for him, and not from vanity, that Massimilla put forth all the charms of her conversation, abounding in Italian wit, in which sarcasm was aimed at things, not at persons, in which ridicule smote ridiculous sentiments, in which the Attic salt imparted a flavor to trifles. Elsewhere, La Cataneo might have been tiresome; the Italians, an eminently intelligent race, are not fond of straining their intelligence without occasion; among them conversation flows smoothly and without effort; it never implies, as in France, a fencing-school bout, in which everyone brandishes

his foil, and in which the man who has not been able to say a word is humiliated. If their conversation emits an occasional gleam, it is by virtue of a kindly and voluptuous irony which sports gracefully with well-known facts; and, instead of an epigram, which may have a compromising effect, the Italians exchange a glance or smile of indescribably subtle meaning. To be called upon to interpret ideas when they have come in quest of enjoyment, is considered by them, and justly, too, a bore.

"If you loved him, you would not talk so well," said La Vulpato to the duchess.

Emilio never mingled in the conversation, he listened and watched. This reserve might have led foreigners to believe that the prince was a man of no intelligence,—a judgment that they commonly form of Italians who are in love,—whereas he was simply a lover buried in happiness up to the neck. Vendramin sat beside the prince, facing the Frenchman, who, being a stranger, retained his place in the corner opposite the chair occupied by the duchess.

"Is yonder gentleman intoxicated?" the physician asked Massimilla in an undertone, with his eyes upon Vendramin.

"Yes," La Cataneo replied simply.

In that land of passion, every passion carries with it its own excuse, and all shortcomings are treated with adorable indulgence. The duchess sighed heavily, and her face betrayed the grief she strove to conceal.

"In our country, strange things happen, monsieur! Vendramin lives on opium, one man lives on love,

another buries himself in science, the majority of wealthy young men fall in love with a dancer, wise men hoard their money: we all seek happiness or intoxication one way or another."

"Because you all seek to divert your thoughts from a fixed idea, which a revolution would radically cure," rejoined the physician. "The Genoese regrets his republic, the Milanese sighs for his independence, the Piedmontese aspires to constitutional government, the Roman desires liberty—"

"Which he does not understand," interposed the duchess. "Alas! there are provinces insane enough to sigh for your absurd Charter, which destroys the influence of women. Most of my compatriots like to read your French productions, worthless trash—"

"Worthless!" cried the physician.

"Why, monsieur," retorted the duchess, "what can we find in books that is better than what we have in our hearts? Italy is mad!"

"I do not see that a people is mad because it wishes to be its own master."

"Great God!" rejoined the duchess, earnestly, "is that anything more than purchasing with much blood the right to quarrel, as you do, for foolish ideas?"

"You love despotism!" exclaimed the physician.

"Why should I not love a system of government which, while depriving us of books and nauseating politics, leaves us our men all to ourselves?"

"I thought the Italians were more patriotic," said the Frenchman.

The duchess laughed so slyly that her questioner could not distinguish raillery from truth, or serious opinions from satirical criticism.

"You are not a liberal, then?" he said.

"God forbid!" she replied. "I can imagine nothing in worse taste than for a woman to entertain opinions of that sort. Could you love a woman who carried mankind in her heart?"

"People who are in love are naturally aristocratic," said the Austrian general, with a smile.

"When we entered the theatre," continued the Frenchman, "I noticed you first of all, and I said to His Excellency that if ever a woman represented a country, you were the one: it seemed to me that I had before me the genius of Italy; but I regret to see that, although you display its sublime form, you have not its constitutional spirit," he added.

"Surely you must consider our dancers detestable and our singers execrable," rejoined the duchess, motioning to him to look at the ballet. "Paris and London steal all our most talented artists: Paris passes judgment on them and London pays them. Genovese and La Tinti will not stay with us six months."

At that moment, the general left the box. Vendramin, the prince, and two other Italians thereupon smiled at one another, glancing significantly at the French physician. Strangely enough, considering that he was a Frenchman, he began to doubt himself, thinking that he had said or done something incongruous; but he soon obtained the key to the enigma.

"Do you think," said Emilio to him, "that we should be prudent to talk openly before our masters?"

"You are in a land of slaves," said the duchess, in a tone and with a movement of the head which instantly imparted anew to her face the expression which the physician had a moment before denied her.—"Vendramin," she said, speaking so that none but the stranger could hear her, "has begun to smoke opium, an infernal inspiration due to an Englishman who, for other reasons than Vendramin's, sought a pleasant death; not the vulgar death to which you have given the form of a skeleton, but death arrayed in the rags which you in France call flags—a maiden crowned with flowers or a laurel wreath; it comes in the midst of a cloud of powder, borne upon the wind of a cannon-ball, or lying on a bed between two courtesans; sometimes it rises from the fumes of a bowl of punch, or from the capricious vapors of the diamond not yet reduced to the state of charcoal. When Vendramin wishes, for three Austrian lire he transforms himself into a Venetian general, he embarks upon the galleys of the Republic, and goes forth to conquer the gilded cupolas of Constantinople; there he lolls on the divans of the seraglio, amid the favorites of the sultan, who has become the vassal of his triumphant Venice. Then he returns, bringing with him the plunder of the Turkish empire to restore his palace. He passes from the women of the Orient to the doubly masked intrigues of his dear Venetians,

dreading the effects of a jealousy which no longer exists. For three *swansiks*, he transports himself in spirit to the Council of Ten, he wields its terrible power, devotes his energies to the greatest affairs of State, and leaves the ducal palace to lie in a gondola beneath two eyes of flame, or to scale a balcony from which a white hand has lowered the silken ladder; he loves a woman to whom opium imparts a touch of poesy which we women of flesh and blood cannot offer him. Suddenly, on turning his head, he finds himself confronted by the awe-inspiring face of the senator, armed with a dagger; he hears the dagger sinking into his mistress's heart, and she dies, smiling at him, for she saved him !—She is very fortunate," said the duchess, glancing at the prince. "He escapes and hastens to take command of the Dalmatians, to conquer the Illyrian coast for his beautiful Venice, where his renown wins her forgiveness, where he tastes the joys of domestic life: a fireside, a winter evening, a young wife, charming children, who pray to Saint Mark under the direction of an elderly nursemaid. Yes, for three lire worth of opium he fills our empty arsenal, he sees convoys of merchandise arrive and depart, despatched to or ordered from the four quarters of the globe. The power of modern industry displays its marvels, not in London, but in his Venice, where the hanging gardens of Semiramis, the temples of Jerusalem, the wonderful edifices of Rome, are reproduced. Lastly, he magnifies the Middle Ages by the prodigies of steam, by new masterpieces to

which the arts give birth, patronized as Venice formerly patronized them. Monuments and men jostle one another in his narrow brain, where empires, cities, revolutions, crumble and fall in a few hours, where Venice alone increases in grandeur and glory; for the Venice of his dreams has the empire of the sea, two millions of people, the sceptre of Italy, the sovereignty of the Mediterranean and the Indies!"

"What an opéra is performed in a man's brain! what a mystery it is, imperfectly understood even by those who have made the tour of it, like Gall!" cried the physician.

"Dear duchess," said Vendramin, in a hollow voice, "do not forget the final service which my elixir will render me. After hearing enchanting voices, after absorbing music through all my pores, after experiencing the most agonizing pleasures, and gratifying the most intense passions of Mahomet's paradise, I have now reached the stage of ghastly visions. I see now in my beloved Venice children's faces distorted like the faces of the dying, women covered with horrible wounds, bleeding and moaning; men torn asunder, crushed between the copper sides of vessels in collision. I am beginning to see Venice as she is, covered with crêpe, naked, despoiled. Pallid phantoms glide through her streets! Already the soldiers of Austria are frowning, already my lovely dream life is yielding to real life; whereas, six months since, real life was the disturbed slumber, and the life of opium was my life of love and

pleasure, of momentous affairs and lofty policies. Alas! woe is me, I am drawing near the dawn of the tomb, where the false and the true unite in doubtful beams which are neither light nor darkness, but which partake of the nature of both."

"You see there is too much patriotism in this head," said the prince, laying his hand upon the masses of black hair which towered above Vendramin's forehead.

"Oh! if he loves us, he will soon give up his horrible opium," said Massimilla.

"I will cure your friend," said the Frenchman.

"Effect that cure and we will love you," rejoined Massimilla; "and, if you do not slander us on your return to France, we will love you still more. We poor Italians are too thoroughly crushed by heavy-handed dominations to be fairly judged; we have been under your domination, you know," she added, with a smile.

"It was more generous than that of Austria," replied the physician, earnestly.

"Austria squeezes us without returning anything, and you squeeze us in order to enlarge and beautify our cities; you stimulated us by making war on us. You expected to retain Italy, and the others expect to lose it, that is the whole difference. The Austrians allow us to enjoy a sort of happiness that is stupefying and heavy like them, whereas you crushed us with your all-devouring activity. But death is death all the same, whether caused by stimulants or narcotics, eh, signor doctor?"

"Poor Italy! to me she is like a lovely woman whom France ought to take for mistress and defend," replied the physician.

"You could never love us as it is our whim to be loved," said the duchess, with a smile. "We wish to be free, but the freedom I would enjoy is not your ignoble, middle-class liberalism, which would destroy the arts. I wish," she continued in a tone that sent a thrill through the whole box, "that is to say, I would like that each Italian republic should be born anew with its nobles, with its common people, and with its special privileges for each caste. I would like a return of the old aristocratic republics, with their intestine conflicts, with their rivalries which produced the noblest works of art, which created the science of politics, and founded the most illustrious princely houses. To extend the action of a government over a great stretch of territory is to weaken it. The Italian republics were the glory of Europe in the Middle Ages. Why did Italy succumb where the Swiss, its porters, were victorious?"

"The Swiss republics," said the physician, "were excellent housekeepers intent upon their petty affairs, with no occasion to be envious of one another; whereas your republics were haughty sovereigns, who sold themselves in order not to do homage to their neighbors; they have fallen too low ever to rise again. The Guelphs are triumphant!"

"Do not pity us too much," said the duchess in a tone which made the hearts of the two friends beat fast, "we tower above you still! In the depths

of her degradation, Italy reigns through the medium of the great men who swarm in her cities. Unfortunately, the majority of our geniuses attain a thorough comprehension of life so rapidly that they bury themselves in painful enjoyment of its pleasures; as for those who choose to play at the melancholy game of immortality, they are quick to grasp your gold and to deserve your admiration. Yes, in this country, whose deterioration is deplored by foolish travellers and hypocritical poets, whose character is slandered by politicians; in this country, which seems enervated, powerless, in ruins, prematurely aged rather than old, there are in every walk of life mighty geniuses who put forth sturdy shoots, as an old vine puts forth branches which bear delicious grapes. This race of former sovereigns still produces kings whose names are Lagrange, Volta, Rosori, Canova, Rossini, Bartolini, Galvani, Vigano, Beccaria, Cicognara, and Corvetto. These Italians dominate that portion of the human stage upon which they establish themselves, or the art to which they devote themselves. To say nothing of the singers and instrumentalists who arouse the admiration of Europe by the incredible perfection of their art, Paganini, Taglioni, and the rest, Italy still reigns over the whole world, which will come to worship at her feet forever. Go this evening to the *Florian*, you will find in Capraja one of our great men, but a man enamored of obscurity; no one save Duke Cataneo, my lord, understands music better than he; indeed, he is known here as *Il Fanatico!*"

After a few moments, during which the conversation became more animated between the Frenchman and the duchess, who showed that she possessed much shrewdness and eloquence, the Italians withdrew, one by one, to report in all the boxes that La Cataneo, who was reputed to be a *donna di gran spiritu,* had worsted a clever French physician on the subject of Italy. It was the sensation of the evening. When the Frenchman found that he was alone with the prince and the duchess, he realized that they wished to be left by themselves, so he took his leave. Massimilla returned his parting salutation with a bow which removed him to such a distance from her, that she might thereby have incurred the man's hatred, if he had been able to forget the charm of her speech and her beauty. Toward the end of the opera, therefore, Emilio was left alone with Massimilla; they took each other's hand and listened thus to the duo with which *Il Barbiere* comes to an end.

"Music alone can express love," said the duchess, deeply moved by that burst of song from two happy nightingales.

Tears stood in Emilio's eyes; Massimilla, sublime with the beauty typified in Raphael's Saint Cecilia, pressed his hand, their knees touched; she had, as it were, a kiss blossoming upon her lips. The prince saw upon his mistress's rosy cheeks a joyous flush like that which rises on a summer's day above the golden fields; his heart was overburdened by the blood rushing thither; he fancied that he heard a

concert of angelic voices, he would have given his life to feel the desire which the abhorred Clarina had aroused in him at such an hour the preceding night; but he was not conscious even that he had a body. The unhappy Massimilla, in her innocence, attributed his tears to the remark which Genovese's cavatina had extorted from her.

"*Carino*," she whispered in Emilio's ear, "surely you are as much above protestations of love as cause is superior to effect!"

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After putting the duchess in her gondola, Emilio waited for Vendramin to go with him to the *Florian*.

The Café Florian at Venice is an indescribable institution. Business men transact their business there, and barristers make appointments there to discuss their most involved causes. The Florian is at one and the same time a merchants' exchange, a theatre *foyer*, a bookstall, a club, a confessional, and is so thoroughly in consonance with the simple habits of the country, that some Venetian women have absolutely no idea of the nature of their husbands' business; for, when they have a letter to write, they go to this café to write it. Naturally, spies abound at the Florian; but their presence sharpens the Venetian wit, which in that place has an opportunity to display the prudence once so famous. Many people pass their whole day at the Florian; in short, the Florian has become such a necessity to some people, that, during the entr'actes, they leave their friends' boxes, and look in there to learn what is being talked about.

While the two friends were walking through the narrow streets of the Merceria, they did not speak, there were too many passers; but, as soon as they turned into the square Saint Mark, the prince said:

"Let's not go to the café yet, let us walk on. I have something to tell you."

He described his adventure with La Tinti and his present plight. Emilio's despair seemed to Vendramin so closely akin to madness, that he promised to cure him completely if he would give him *carte blanche* in his dealings with Massimilla. The hope thus held out came just in time to prevent Emilio from drowning himself during the night; for, when he remembered the singer, he was conscious of a horrible longing to return to her. The two friends betook themselves to the innermost salon of the Florian, to listen to the typical Venetian conversation which certain choice spirits were sure to be carrying on there, talking over the events of the day. The principal subjects were, in the first place, the personality of Lord Byron, of whom the Venetians slyly made sport; secondly, Cataneo's attachment for La Tinti, which seemed quite inexplicable, after it had been explained in twenty different ways; thirdly, Genovese's début; and, lastly, the battle between the duchess and the French physician. Duke Cataneo appeared in the salon just as the conversation became intensely musical. He bestowed a most courteous salutation upon Emilio,—so natural a proceeding that no one noticed it,—and the prince gravely acknowledged it. Cataneo looked about to see if any of his acquaintances were present; he saw Vendramin and bowed to him, then to his banker, a very wealthy patrician, and, lastly, to the man who was talking at that moment, a celebrated musical enthusiast and friend of the Countess Albrizzi, whose mode of life, like that of many habitués

of the Florian, was entirely unknown, so carefully was it concealed: nothing was known of him except what he told at the café.

It was Capraja, the nobleman whom the duchess had mentioned to the French physician. He belonged to that class of dreamers who divine everything by the power of their thought. A designer of fantastic theories, he cared as little for fame as for a broken pipe. His life was in harmony with his opinions. He appeared under the *procuraties* about ten in the morning, coming from nobody knew where; he sauntered about Venice, smoking cigars. He was a regular attendant at La Fenice, always sat in the pit, and went between the acts to the Florian, where he drank three or four cups of coffee a day; he finished the evening in the salon, which he left about two in the morning.

Twelve hundred francs a year satisfied all his needs; he ate only one meal each day, at a pastry-cook's on the Merceria, where his dinner was always ready at a certain hour, on a small table in the back part of the shop; the pastry-cook's daughter herself served him with stuffed oysters, supplied him with cigars, and took care of his money. In accordance with his advice, this young woman, although she was exceedingly pretty, refused to listen to any lover, led a virtuous life, and clung to the old Venetian costume. This pure-blooded daughter of Venice was twelve years old when Capraja became interested in her, and twenty-six when he died; she loved him dearly, although he had never so much as

kissed her hand or her brow, and although she was entirely ignorant of the poor old nobleman's intentions. She had finally acquired over him the absolute empire of a mother over a child; she told him when it was time to change his linen: the next day, Capraja would come without a shirt, and she would give him a clean one which he would take away and wear the following day. He never looked at a woman, either at the theatre or when he was out walking. Although sprung from an old patrician family, his nobility did not seem to him worth the expenditure of a word; after midnight, he threw off his apathy, talked fluently, and showed that he had noticed everything, heard everything. This indolent Diogenes, who was incapable of explaining his doctrines, half-Turk, half-Venetian, was short, coarse-looking, and stout; he had the pointed nose of a doge, the satirical glance of an inquisitor, a discreet, albeit a smiling mouth. At his death, it was learned that he lived in a hovel near San Benedetto. Possessed of two millions in the public funds of various European countries, he had allowed the interest to accumulate from the time of the original investment in 1814; and, as the funds had increased largely in value, the result was an enormous sum. This whole fortune was bequeathed to the pastry-cook's daughter.

"Genovese," he said, "will rise very high. I am not sure whether he understands the true significance of music, or acts simply by instinct, but he is the first singer with whom I have ever been fully

satisfied. I shall not die without hearing *roulades* executed as I have often heard them in dreams, when, on waking, it seemed to me that I could see the notes flying through the air! The *roulade* is the highest expression of art, it is the arabesque which adorns the most beautiful room in the building: a little less, and there is nothing; a little more, and all is confused. Entrusted with the mission of awakening in your soul a thousand sleeping ideas, it rushes through space, sowing in the air seeds which, being gathered up by the ears, germinate in the heart. Believe me, Raphael, when painting his Saint Cecilia, gave music precedence over poetry. He was right; music appeals to the heart, while written words appeal only to the intelligence; music communicates its ideas instantly, after the manner of perfumes. The singer's voice strikes not the thought, not the memories of our felicities, but the elements of thought, and sets in motion the very essence of our sensations. It is a deplorable fact that the common herd has compelled musicians to adapt their measures to words, to artificial interests; but it is true that otherwise they would not be understood by the multitude. The *roulade*, therefore, is the only point left for the friends of pure music, the lovers of art in its nakedness, to cling to. To-night, as I listened to that last cavatina, I imagined that I had received an invitation from a lovely girl who, by a single glance, restored my youth! the enchantress placed a crown on my head and led me to the ivory gate through which we enter the mysterious land of Reverie. I

owe it to Genovese that I was able to lay aside my old envelope for a few moments, brief as measured by watches, but very long as measured by sensations. During a springtime, balmy with the breath of roses, I was young and beloved!"

"You are mistaken, *Caro* Capraja," said the duke. "There is a power in music more magical in its effects than that of the *roulade*."

"What is it?" queried Capraja.

"The perfect accord of two voices, or of one voice and a violin, which is the instrument whose tone approaches the human voice most nearly," replied the duke. "This perfect accord carries us further into the centre of life, upon the stream of elemental principles which vivifies the senses, and bears man into the midst of the luminous sphere whither his mind can convoke the whole world. You must have a theme, Capraja, but for me the pure essence is sufficient; you desire the water to pass through the millwright's innumerable canals, to fall in dazzling cascades; while I am content with a calm, pure sheet of water, my eye scans an unruffled sea, I can embrace infinity!"

"Hush, Cataneo," remarked Capraja, haughtily. "How now! do you not see the fairy who, in her swift course through a luminous atmosphere, assembles there, with the golden thread of harmony, the melodious treasures which she smilingly tosses down to us? Have you never felt the touch of the magic wand with which she says to Curiosity: 'Rise!' The goddess rises radiant from the depths of the

abysses of the brain, she runs to her marvellous treasure-chests, and breathes upon them as the organist touches his keys. Suddenly, memories spring forth, bringing the roses of the past, preserved by divine power and always fresh. Our young mistress returns and caresses with her white hands a young man's locks; the too-full heart overflows, we see the flower-strewn banks of the torrents of love. All the ardent vegetation of youth blazes brightly and repeats the divine words once heard and understood! And the voice rolls on, it embraces in its swift revolutions the fleeing horizons and contracts them; they disappear, eclipsed by new, more intense joys, the joys of an unknown future to which the fairy points as she takes flight into her blue heavens."

"And have you," retorted Cataneo, "never known the direct gleam of a star to lay open to your gaze the abysses of the upper world, and have you never ascended on that ray of light into the sky, amid the elements which keep the worlds in motion?"

The duke and Capraja were playing a game of which the rules were unknown to all their auditors.

"Genovese's voice seizes the very fibres," said Capraja.

"And La Tinti's attacks the blood," rejoined the duke.

"What a paraphrase of happy love that cavatina contains!" said Capraja. "Ah! Rossini was young when he wrote that theme for the behoof of the

pleasure that effervesces! My heart was filled with fresh blood, a thousand desires struck fire in my veins. Never did more angelic sounds more completely relax my corporeal bonds! never did the fairy display more beautifully moulded arms, nor smile more amorously, nor raise her tunic more bewitchingly above her knee, raising thus the curtain behind which my other life lies hidden!"

"To-morrow night, my old friend," replied the duke, "you will sit upon the back of a dazzling white swan, who will show you the most fertile of all countries; you will see the spring as children see it. Your heart will glow in the light of a new sun; you will lie upon red silk, beneath the eyes of a Madonna; you will be like a happy lover voluptuously caressed by a Joy, whose bare feet can still be seen, but who will soon disappear. The swan will be Genovese's voice, if it can achieve perfect unison with its Leda, the voice of La Tinti. To-morrow we are to have *Moses*, the most glorious opera that the noblest genius of Italy has ever produced."

The others allowed the duke and Capraja to talk on, not choosing to be the dupes of a mystification; Vendramin and the French physician alone listened to them for a few moments. The opium smoker understood this poetic language, he had the key to the palace through which those two voluptuous imaginations were straying. The physician tried to understand, and succeeded; for he belonged to that constellation of great geniuses of the Paris school from which the true physician comes forth a no

less profound metaphysician than an accomplished analyst.

"Did you hear them?" Emilio asked Vendramin, as they left the café about two in the morning.

"Yes, dear Emilio," Vendramin replied, leading the way to his own house. "Those two men belong to the legion of pure intellects who are able to divest themselves of the larvæ of the flesh, and to fly, astride the body of the queen of witches, through the azure heavens where the sublime wonders of the moral life are displayed; they attain through art the point to which your excessive love guides you, and to which opium transports me. They can be understood only by their peers. I, whose faculties are exalted by a deplorable means; I, who crowd a hundred years of existence into a single night,—I can understand those great minds when they talk of the magnificent country called the country of chimeras by those who deem themselves wise, called the country of realities by us whom men call mad. The duke and Capraja, who formerly knew each other at Naples, where Cataneo was born, are music-mad."

"But what is the extraordinary theory that Capraja attempted to explain to Cataneo?" inquired the prince. "Did you, who understand everything, understand that?"

"Yes," Vendramin replied. "Capraja is intimate with a musician from Cremona who lives in the Capello palace; this musician believes that sound encounters within us a substance analogous to that

which is engendered by the phenomena of light, and which produces ideas in us. According to him, man has keys within, which sounds affect, and which correspond to our nerve-centres from which our sensations and ideas spring! Capraja, who looks upon the arts as a collection of the means whereby man can bring external nature into harmony with a mysterious internal nature, which he calls an inward life, has adopted the ideas of this instrument-maker, who is at this moment composing an opera. Imagine a sublime creation in which the marvels of visible creation are reproduced with immeasurable grandeur, lightness, rapidity, and breadth, in which the sensations are infinite, and to which certain privileged natures endowed with a divine power can penetrate—then you will have an idea of the ecstatic delights of which Cataneo and Capraja, poets in their own eyes only, discoursed so earnestly. But it is true, also, that, as soon as a man, in the sphere of moral nature, oversteps the limits within which plastic works are produced by the process of imitation, to enter into the kingdom, wholly spiritual, of abstractions, where everything is viewed in its essence and in the omnipotence of results, that man is no longer understood by ordinary intellects."

"You have explained my love for Massimilla," said Emilio. "My dear fellow, there is a power within me which wakes under the flame of her glance, at her lightest touch, and casts me into a world of light where effects are produced of which I have never dared to speak to you. It has often

seemed to me that the delicate tissue of her skin leaves the imprint of flowers upon mine, when her hand rests upon my hand. Her words correspond to the interior keys of which you speak. Desire excites my brain and stirs this invisible world to activity, instead of exciting my inert body; and the air becomes red and sparkles, unfamiliar perfumes of indescribable pungency relax my nerves, the walls of my brain are lined with roses, and it seems to me that my blood is ebbing away through all my open arteries, my languor is so intense."

"That is the effect opium has upon me," said Vendramin.

"Would you then, die?" said Emilio in horror.

"With Venice," exclaimed Vendramin, stretching out his hand toward Saint Mark's. "Can you see a single one among those turrets and spires which is straight? Do you not understand that the sea will soon claim its prey?"

The prince hung his head, and dared not speak of love to his friend. One must travel among conquered nations to learn what a free country is. When they reached the Vendramini palace, they saw a gondola at the water door. Thereupon the prince put his arm about Vendramin's waist and embraced him affectionately, saying:

"Good-night, dear fellow!"

"A woman for me, when I lie with Venice!" cried Vendramin.

At that moment, the gondolier, who was leaning against a pillar, spied the two friends, recognized the

man who had been described to him, and said in the prince's ear:

"The duchess, monseigneur."

Emilio leaped into the gondola, where he was entwined by arms of iron, but supple in their strength, and drawn down upon cushions where he felt the heaving breast of an amorous woman. Instantly the prince ceased to be Emilio, and became La Tinti's lover, for his sensations were so bewildering that he fell, as if stupefied by the first kiss.

"Forgive me for this trick, my love," said the Sicilian. "I shall die if I do not take you with me!"

And the gondola flew over the silent waves.

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The next evening, at half-past seven, the spectators were in the same seats at the theatre, except the habitués of the pit, who always take their seats at random. Old Capraja was in Cataneo's box. Before the overture, the duke came to pay the duchess a visit; he ostentatiously stood behind Massimilla and allowed Emilio to remain beside her, at the front of the box. He made a few unmeaning remarks, free from irony or bitterness, and with as courteous a manner as if he were visiting a stranger. Despite his efforts to appear affable and natural, the prince could not change his expression, which was wofully thoughtful and anxious. The indifferent would probably attribute to jealousy so marked a change in his usually calm features. Doubtless the duchess shared Emilio's emotions, for her brow was clouded and she was visibly depressed. The duke, who was sadly embarrassed between those two ungracious expressions, took advantage of the Frenchman's entrance to leave the box.

"Monsieur," said Cataneo to his physician before letting fall the portière of the box, "you are about to hear an immense musical drama, by no means easy to understand on the first hearing; but I leave you with the duchess, who can understand it better than anyone else, for she is my pupil."

The physician was impressed, as the duke had

been, by the expression on the faces of the two lovers, which denoted a morbid despair.

"So an Italian opera requires an interpreter?" he smilingly inquired of the duchess.

Recalled by this question to her duties as mistress of the box, the duchess tried to drive away the clouds that lay heavy on her brow, and, in reply, grasped eagerly at a subject of conversation upon which she could pour out her inward irritation.

"It is not an opera, monsieur," she said, "but an oratorio, a work which bears much resemblance to one of our most magnificent buildings, and I will gladly guide you through it. I assure you that you will do well to give your whole mind to our great Rossini, for one must be poet and musician at once to comprehend the full scope of such music. You belong to a nation whose language and genius are too positive to allow it to enter readily into the enjoyment of music; but France is likewise too comprehensive in her tastes not to end by loving it and cultivating it, and you Frenchmen will succeed in that as in everything else. Moreover, we must realize the fact that music, as Lulli, Rameau, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cimarosa, Paisiello, and Rossini have developed it, and as the noble geniuses of the future will perpetuate it, is a new art, unknown to past generations, who had not so many instruments as we have now, and who knew nothing of harmony, upon which the beauties of music rest to-day, as upon a fertile soil. An art so novel requires study among the masses, study which will develop

the sentiment to which music appeals. This sentiment hardly exists among you, a nation engrossed by philosophical theories, by analysis and discussions, and always disturbed by civil dissensions. Modern music, which demands perfect peace, is the language of affectionate, loving hearts, inclined to a noble interior exaltation. This language, a thousand times richer than the language of words, is to the latter what thought is to speech; it awakes sensations and ideas in the same form in which sensations and ideas are born in us, but leaves them as they are in each one. This power over our inward life is one of the grandest features of music. The other arts impress definite creations on the mind, music is infinite in its creations. We are obliged to accept the poet's ideas, the painter's picture, the sculptor's statue; but each one of us interprets music according to the dictates of his sorrow or his joy, his hopes or his despair. Where other arts circumscribe our thoughts, and direct them upon one definite object, music sets them loose upon all nature which it has the power to interpret to us. You shall see how I understand Rossini's *Moses!*"

She leaned toward the physician in order to speak so that no one else could hear.

"Moses is the liberator of an enslaved people!" she said; "remember that thought, and you will see with what religious hope La Fenice from pit to gallery will listen to the prayer of the Hebrews delivered from bondage, and with what thunders of applause it will respond!"

Emilio withdrew to the back of the box as the leader of the orchestra raised his bow. The duchess motioned to the physician to take the place vacated by the prince. But the Frenchman was more curious to know what had taken place between the lovers, than desirous to enter the musical palace built by the man whom all Italy was then applauding, for Rossini was at that time enjoying a triumph in his native land. The Frenchman narrowly watched the duchess, who spoke under great nervous excitement, and reminded him of the *Niobe* he had lately admired at Florence: the same noble dignity in sorrow, the same physical impassiveness; the soul, however, cast a reflection upon the warm coloring of her flesh, and her eyes, in which languor slowly gave way to a haughty expression, dried their tears with a fierce flame. Her restrained grief grew less poignant when she looked at Emilio, who kept his eyes fixed upon her face. It was easy to see that she longed to soothe a violent despair. The plight of her heart imparted an indefinable touch of grandeur to her mind. Like most women when they are spurred on by intense emotion, she went beyond her usual limits, and displayed something of the pythoness, albeit not ceasing to be noble and great, for it was the form of her ideas, and not her face, which was writhing in desperation. Perhaps she chose to put forth all her intellect in order to make life more attractive, and to retain her hold upon her lover.

When the orchestra had played the three chords

in *C* major, which the master has placed at the beginning of his work to explain that his overture will be sung, for the real overture is the vast theme extending from that abrupt beginning to the moment when the light appears at the bidding of Moses, the duchess could not restrain a convulsive movement which proved how thoroughly the music harmonized with her concealed suffering.

"How those three chords freeze your blood!" she said. "They prepare one for sorrow. Listen closely to this introduction, the subject of which is the heart-rending lament of a people stricken by the hand of God. What a moaning! The king, the queen, their oldest son, the great men, the whole people are bewailing their fate; they are struck down in their pride, in their conquests, checked in their avidity. Dear Rossini, you did well to toss that bone to the *Tedeschi* to gnaw, for they denied us the gift of harmony and learning! Now you will hear the ominous melody which the master has introduced into this profound harmonic composition, comparable to the most involved works the Germans have produced, but free from all fatiguing or tiresome effects upon our minds. You Frenchmen, who have recently achieved the most sanguinary of revolutions, among whom aristocracy was crushed beneath the paws of the popular lion, will understand, when this oratorio is performed in France, this magnificent lament of the victims of a God who avenges His people. Only an Italian could compose this fruitful, inexhaustible, and wholly Dantesque theme. Do you deem it a

trifle to dream of vengeance for a single moment? Ye old German masters, Handel, Sebastian Bach, and thou, Beethoven, to your knees, behold the queen of the arts, behold triumphant Italy!"

The duchess was able to say thus much while the curtain was rising. Then the physician listened to the sublime symphony with which the composer opens that vast Biblical scene. The subject is the grief of a whole people. Grief is always the same in its expression, especially when caused by physical suffering. And so, after he has instinctively divined, like all men of genius, that there can be no variety in the ideas associated with grief, the musician, when his leading motive is once determined upon, proceeds to develop it from tonality to tonality, grouping his characters and his choruses around that motive by modulations and cadenzas of marvellous flexibility. Power is revealed in this very simplicity. The effect of this opening phrase, which depicts the sensations produced by cold and darkness in a people hitherto always bathed by the luminous waves of the sun, and which the people and their rulers take up and repeat, is most impressive. There is a something indefinably pitiless in the slow movement. The unusual, sorrowful phrase is like an iron bar held by some celestial executioner, who lets it fall upon the limbs of all these victims in perfect rhythm. By dint of listening to the transition from *C* minor to *G* minor, thence to *C* once more, and so back to the key-note *G*, to begin anew *fortissimo* upon the tonic *E* flat, passing thence to *F* major and

returning to *C* minor, more and more laden with terror, cold, and darkness, the spectator's mind associates itself at last with the impressions described by the musician. So that the Frenchman experienced the keenest emotion when there came the explosion of all these united griefs, crying:

"O Nume d'Israel,
Se brami in libertà
Il popol tuo fedel,
Di lui, di noi pietà!"

—O God of Israel, if it be Thy will that Thy faithful people be freed from their bondage, deign to have pity upon them and upon us!—

"Never was there so wonderful a combination of natural effects, so complete an idealization of nature. In great national disasters, each individual bewails his fate at great length and separately; then cries of grief, more or less violent, arise here and there from the multitude; finally, when misery has come home to all, it bursts forth like a tempest. When they have once reached an understanding concerning the wound that is common to them all, then the people change their dull moaning to impatient outcries. That is the course Rossini has followed. After the explosion in *C* major, Pharaoh sings his sublime recitative *Mano ultrice di un Dio!*—Avenging God, too late I recognize Thy hand!—Thereupon the original motive assumes a livelier tone: all Egypt summons Moses to its assistance."

The duchess had availed herself of the interlude

necessitated by the arrival of Moses and Aaron, to explain the beautiful passage.

"Let them weep!" she added, passionately, "they have done much harm. Expiate, Egyptians, the sins of your insensate court! With what art the great painter has employed all the dark colors of music, and all the melancholy tints to be found upon the musical palette! What frigid darkness! what mists! Is not your heart in mourning? are not you convinced of the reality of the black clouds in which the stage is shrouded? In your eyes is not nature enveloped by the densest shadows? There are neither Egyptian palaces nor palm-trees nor landscapes. Think, then, what untold comfort the profoundly religious notes of the divine physician who is about to cure this painful wound will bring to your soul! How naturally everything leads up to Moses's magnificent invocation to God! As the result of careful reasoning by analogy, which Capraja will explain to you, this invocation is accompanied by the brasses alone. These instruments give to the passage its noble religious coloring. Not only is the artifice admirable in this spot, but see how fertile genius is in resources: Rossini has extracted new beauties from the obstacle he placed in his own path. He reserves the stringed instruments to represent the light when it succeeds the darkness, and by this means to achieve one of the most powerful effects ever known in music. Until this inimitable genius appeared, had so much ever been made out of the recitative? As yet, there has been no air,

no duet. The poet has sustained himself by the force of his thought, by the vigor of his images, by the truth of his declamation. This scene of sorrow, this profound darkness, these cries of despair, this musical tableau, are as fine as your great Poussin's *Deluge.*"

Moses waved his staff and the day appeared.

"See, monsieur, how the music struggles with the sun, whose brilliancy it has borrowed, with all nature, whose phenomena it reproduces to the most trifling details," continued the duchess in an undertone. "At this point, art reaches its apogee, no musician will ever go further. Do you hear Egypt waking after this long lethargy? Happiness permeates everywhere with the light. In what ancient or modern work will you find such a beautiful page? the most exuberant joy contrasted with the most profound melancholy? What shrieks! what joyously tripping notes! how the oppressed heart throbs! what a delirium of joy! mark the *tremolo* in the orchestra! What a noble *ensemble!* It is the joy of a rescued people! Do you not feel a thrill of pleasure?"

The physician, surprised by the contrast, one of the most magnificent in modern music, clapped his hands in enthusiastic admiration.

"*Brava La Doni!*" said Vendramin, who had been listening.

"The introduction is finished," resumed the duchess. "You have experienced a violent emotion," she said to the physician; "your heart is beating fast, you have seen in the depths of your imagination

the most resplendent of suns inundating with its torrents of light a whole country, but now cold and dismal. Understand now how the musician has done his work, in order that you may be able to admire him to-morrow in the secrets of his genius, after undergoing his influence to-day. What think you this passage of the sunrise is, so varied, so brilliant, so perfect? It consists of a simple chord in the key of *C*, repeated again and again, blended only with a chord of quart de sixte. Herein the magic of his process is revealed. He has adopted the same method to represent the coming of the light that he employed to represent darkness and sorrow. This dawn depicted in images is exactly like a natural dawn. Light is an unchangeable substance, always the same, its effects varied only by the objects it meets; is it not so? Now, the musician has chosen for the basis of his work a single motive, a simple chord in *C*. The sun appears and sheds its rays upon the hill-tops and thence into the valleys. So the strain begins upon the first string of the first violins, softly as the north wind, then extends through the orchestra, vivifies all the instruments one by one, gradually unfolds itself. As the light steals onward, shining upon one object after another, so the music proceeds, awakening each source of harmony until all flow on together in the *ensemble*. The violins, which you have not heard before, give the signal with their soft tremolo, quivering vaguely like the first waves of light. This charming, joyous movement, which caresses your very soul, the skilful musician has

interspersed with bass chords, by a wavering blast upon the horns, restricted to their lowest notes, in order to bring before your eyes the last cool shadows which linger in the valleys while the first flames are playing about the hill-tops. Then the wind-instruments softly swell the volume of sound, strengthening the general harmony. The voices join, with sighs of gladness and wonder. Lastly, the brasses ring out exultantly, the trumpets burst forth! Light, the source of harmony, inundates nature, whereupon all the treasures of music are revealed with a force and brilliancy equal to those of the beams of the Eastern sun. Even the triangle, with its *C* repeated again and again, reminds you of the song of the birds in the morning, by its shrill notes and its mischievous play. The same tonality, repeated by that master hand, expresses the joy of all nature, soothing the pain that rent your heart a moment since. There is the stamp of the master: unity! It is one, yet varied. A single phrase and a thousand sorrowful emotions, the miseries of a nation; a single chord, and all the incidents of the awakening of nature, all the different expressions of a nation's joy. These two grand pages are welded together by an appeal to the ever-living God, the author of all things, of this sorrow and of this joy as well. Is not this introduction, taken by itself, a grand poem?"

"It is, indeed," said the Frenchman.

"Now comes a quintet, such as Rossini alone can write; if he has ever been guilty of the sensuous, yielding wantonness for which our music is

reprobated, it surely is in this beautiful passage, in which everyone gives voice to his gladness, in which the nation is delivered from bondage, but in which the sighing of an imperilled love is soon to be heard. Pharaoh's son loves a Jewess, and the Jewess leaves him. The thing that makes this quintet delightful and enchanting is the return to the ordinary emotions of life after the grandiose description of the two most immense scenes in the life of a nation and in nature, misery, and happiness, surrounded by the magic charm which they owe to the divine vengeance and to the marvellous Bible narrative.— Was I not right?" she asked the Frenchman, at the close of the magnificent *stretto:*

"Voci di giubilo
D'in'orno echeggino,
Di pace l'Iride
Per noi spunto."

—What shouts of joy arise about us, the star of peace sheds its light for us.—

"With what art the composer has constructed this passage!" she continued, after a pause, during which she awaited a reply; "he begins it with a horn solo of divine sweetness, supported by arpeggios on the harps, for the first voices to be heard in this grand concert are those of Moses and Aaron, when they offer thanks to the true God; their duo, melodious and solemn, recalls the sublime ideas of the invocation, and accords none the less with the joy of the profane people. There is in this transition

something at once celestial and terrestrial, which genius alone can detect, and which gives to the andante of the quintet a coloring which I can compare only to that with which Titian surrounds the heads of his divine characters. Do you notice how beautifully the voices blend? How deftly the composer has arranged the vocal passages to correspond with the charming strains played by the orchestra! With what skill he paves the way for the jubilation of his allegro! Can you not see in your mind's eye the dancing multitudes, the wild gambols of a people delivered from their peril? And when the clarinet gave the signal for the stretto, *Voci di giubilo*, so brilliant and animated, did you not *feel* in your heart the rhythm of that sacred Pyrrhic dance of which King David speaks in his Psalms, and which he represents the hills as executing?"

"Yes, it would make a charming tune for a contra-dance!" said the physician.

"French! French! always French!" cried the duchess, checked at the very height of her exaltation by that sharp thrust. "Yes, you are capable of using that sublime outburst, so joyous, so noble in its blithesomeness, for your rigadoons! A sublime poetic conception never obtains favor in your eyes. The loftiest genius, saints, kings, the unfortunate, all that is most sacred on earth, must run the gauntlet of your caricature! The vulgarization of great ideas by your jig-tunes is caricature in music. Among you Frenchmen the mind kills the soul, as constant arguing kills common sense."

The whole box remained silent during the recitative between Osiris and Membré, who conspire to neutralize the order for the departure of the Hebrews given by Pharaoh.

"Have I vexed you?" the doctor asked the duchess; "if so, I am in despair. Your words are like a magic wand; they open compartments in my brain from which novel ideas come forth, inspired by this sublime music."

"No," she replied. "You have praised our great musician after your fashion. Rossini will succeed among you, I am sure, by virtue of his cleverness and sensuousness. Let us hope, too, that there are some noble souls, in love with the ideal, to be found in your fruitful country, who will appreciate the elevation, the grandeur, of such music.—Ah! this is the famous duo between Elcia and Osiris," she continued, making the most of the time afforded by the triple round of applause with which the pit welcomed La Tinti on her first appearance. "If La Tinti has thoroughly mastered the rôle of Elcia, you will hear the sublime song of a woman distracted by the conflict between love of country and love for one of her oppressors, whereas Osiris, possessed by a frantic passion for his lovely conquest, strives to retain her. The opera is based upon this great theme, no less than upon the resistance of the Pharaohs to the power of God and of liberty; you must fix it in your mind, or you will fail to comprehend this far-reaching work. Notwithstanding the disfavor with which you accept the inventions of our librettists, you will

allow me to call your attention to the art with which this drama is constructed. The antagonism which is essential to all fine works, and so favorable to the proper development of the music, is duly provided. What more fruitful theme than a people longing for liberty, held in bondage by bad faith, sustained by God, multiplying prodigies of courageous effort to gain their liberty? What more dramatic than the prince's love for a Jewess, which almost justifies the treachery of the oppressor? And yet all this is set forth in this bold, this superb musical poem, wherein Rossini has preserved the legendary national characteristics of each people, for we have attributed to them a historical grandeur to which all imaginative minds assent. The hymns of the Hebrews, and their confidence in God, are constantly contrasted with the cries of rage and the struggles of Pharaoh, who is depicted in the fulness of his power. At this moment, Osiris, absorbed by his love, hopes to retain his mistress by evoking memories of all the delights of passion, he strives to prevail over the attractions of nationality. Thus you will recognize the divine languor, the melting ardor, the caresses, the voluptuous memories of oriental love in Osiris's *Ah! se puoi cosi lasciarmi!*—If thou hast the courage to leave me, break my heart!—and in Elcia's reply: *Ma perchè cosi straziarmi!*—Why torment me thus, when my grief is beyond words!—No, two hearts so melodiously united could never part," she continued, glancing at the prince. "But the lovers are suddenly interrupted by the triumphant

voice of the fatherland thundering in the distance and calling Elcia away. What a divine and delicious *allegro*, this motive of the march of the Hebrews on their way to the desert! Only Rossini can make the clarinets and trumpets say so much! An art which can tell in two phrases all that one's country is to one, is surely nearer heaven than others, is it not? This trumpet-call always moves me so deeply that I cannot describe the cruel sensation of those who are slaves and in chains when they see their more fortunate brethren go free!"

The duchess's eyes were wet as she listened to the magnificent motive which in truth predominates throughout the opera.

"*Dov'è mai quel core amante!*"—What loving heart would not share my agony!—she continued, in Italian, when La Tinti began the beautiful cantilena passage of the *stretto*, in which she implores pity for her suffering.—"But what is happening? there is muttering in the pit."

"Genovese is braying like a stag," said the prince.

In truth, this duet, the first that La Tinti sang, was sadly marred by the utter failure of Genovese. As soon as the tenor began to sing with La Tinti, his beautiful voice changed. His excellent method, which recalled Crescentini and Veluti at the same time, he seemed to have studiously forgotten. Sometimes the effect was spoiled by holding a note at the wrong time, or by a too prolonged flourish. Sometimes a tremendous outburst without transition, a volume of sound poured forth like nature through an

open floodgate, showed complete and wilful forgetfulness of the laws of good taste. Wherefore the pit was immeasurably excited. The Venetians believed that there was some wager between Genovese and his fellows. La Tinti was recalled and frantically applauded, while Genovese received certain warnings which enlightened him as to the hostile disposition of the pit. Throughout this scene, which was comical enough to a Frenchman, La Tinti being constantly recalled,—she appeared alone eleven times to acknowledge the wild applause of the audience, for Genovese, who was almost hissed, dared not lead her before the curtain,—the physician made a remark to the duchess concerning the *stretto* of the duet.

"Rossini ought to express the most profound grief at this point," he said, "and it seems to me that there is a careless swing to the music, a tinge of mirthfulness exceedingly inappropriate."

"You are right," replied the duchess. "That fault is the result of one of the tyrannical laws which our composers must needs obey. He thought more of his prima-donna than of Elcia when he wrote that *stretto*. But to-day, even though La Tinti should execute it even more brilliantly, I enter so thoroughly into the spirit of the work, that this too lively passage is overflowing with melancholy in my eyes."

The physician closely scrutinized the prince and the duchess in turn, but could not divine what it was that separated them and made that duet so

heart-rending to them. Massimilla lowered her voice, and put her lips nearer the doctor's ear.

"Now you are about to hear a superb passage: Pharaoh's plot against the Hebrews. The majestic aria, *A rispettar mi apprenda!*—Let him learn to respect me!—is Carthagenova's triumph; he will give us a marvellously faithful rendering of wounded pride, of the duplicity of courts. The throne is about to speak: it withdraws the concessions it has made, it gives a free rein to its wrath. Pharaoh will rise in his might to pounce upon a victim who is escaping him. Rossini has never written anything of so noble a character, anything so instinct with abundant, resistless energy! It is a complete work in itself, supported by an accompaniment of marvellous workmanship, like every part of this opera, in which the power of youth sparkles everywhere, even in the most trivial details."

Universal applause greeted this beautiful conception, which was admirably rendered by the artist, and most thoroughly understood by the Venetians.

"This is the finale," continued the duchess. "Once more you hear the march, inspired by the joy of deliverance, and by the trust in God which enables a whole people cheerfully to plunge into the desert! What lungs would not be refreshed by the divine outbursts of this people on their relief from bondage? Ah! cherished living melodies! Glory to the noble genius who has been able to express such a multitude of sentiments! There is an indefinable suggestion of the warlike spirit in this march, which

says that this people has the Lord of Hosts on its side! What profound meaning in these hymns, full of prayers for succor! The images of the Bible wake to life in our hearts, and this sublime musical scene enables us to be present in the flesh at one of the grandest scenes in the history of an ancient and solemn world. The religious coloring of certain vocal passages, the way in which the voices come in one after another, each swelling the volume of those that precede it, express all that we can imagine of the sacred marvels of that first age of mankind. And yet this beautiful concerted passage is simply a development of the theme of the march to its furthest musical consequences. That theme is the fertilizing essence for orchestra and voices, for the singing and the brilliant instrumentation by which it is accompanied.—Now Elcia joins the multitude, and is made by Rossini to give expression to regretful thoughts, in order to moderate somewhat the joyous spirit of the passage. Listen to her duet with Amenofi. Did ever wounded love emit such strains? They breathe the charm of the nocturne; there is in them the secret lamentation of wounded love. What intense sadness! Ah! the desert will be twice a desert to her!—At last comes the terrible struggle between Egypt and the Hebrews! the prevailing gladness, the joyous march, everything is interrupted by the arrival of the Egyptians. The promulgation of Pharaoh's commands is accompanied by a musical conception which predominates in the finale, a low, solemn measure; one seems to hear

the march of the Egyptian's mighty hosts surrounding God's devoted phalanx, enveloping it slowly as a long African serpent envelops its prey. What graceful melody in the lamentations of this outraged people! is it not slightly more Italian than Hebrew? What a magnificent movement up to the arrival of Pharaoh, which alone was lacking to bring all the leaders of the two peoples and all the passions of the drama face to face! What an admirable blending of emotions in the sublime octet, in which the wrath of Moses and of the two Pharaohs confront each other! what a contest of voices and of unchained passion! Never did a vaster subject suggest itself to a composer. The famous finale of *Don Giovanni* simply exhibits a libertine face to face with his victims, who call down divine vengeance upon him; while here earth and its powers endeavor to contend against God. Two peoples, one weak, the other strong, are on the stage. And Rossini, having all possible materials at his disposal, has employed them with marvellous skill. He has succeeded, without making himself ridiculous, in representing the different stages of a fierce tempest, against which as a background horrible imprecations stand out in relief. He has employed simple chords, arranged *sur une rhythme en trois temps*, with a gloomy musical energy, with a persistence which overpowers you at last. The rage of the Egyptians when surprised by a rain of fire, the cries of the Hebrews for revenge, demanded skilfully arranged ensemble effects: see, for instance, how he has

developed the orchestral parts side by side with the choruses! The *allegro assai* in *C* minor is positively terrible amid that deluge of fire.—Confess," said the duchess, as Moses, raising his staff, causes the rain of fire to fall, and the composer puts forth all his power in the orchestra and on the stage, "confess that no music ever depicted turmoil and confusion so perfectly."

"The pit has caught the infection," said the physician.

"Why, what is the matter? The pit is certainly very much wrought up!" rejoined the duchess.

In the finale, Genovese had indulged in such absurdly ill-rendered roulades when singing with La Tinti, that the uproar in the pit had reached its height, the enjoyment of the habitués being sadly interfered with. There is nothing more offensive to Italian ears than the contrast between good and bad! The manager appeared before the curtain, and said that he had called his *leading gentleman's* attention to the state of affairs, and that Il Signor Genovese replied that he had no idea wherein and by what means he had forfeited the favor of the public at the very moment when he was striving to reach perfection in his art.

"Let him be as bad as he was yesterday and we will be content!" retorted Capraja, angrily.

This apostrophe restored good humor in the pit. Contrary to the custom in Italy, little heed was paid to the ballet. In all the boxes the only subjects of conversation were Genovese's extraordinary

behavior and the speech of the unfortunate manager. Those who were privileged to enter the wings hastened thither to learn the secret of the comedy, and soon everyone was talking of a horrible scene between La Tinti and Genovese, in which the primadonna charged the tenor with being jealous of her success, with embarrassing her acting by his absurd conduct, and with actually trying to spoil her effects in depicting passion. The singer wept hot tears over this misfortune. She had hoped, she said, to afford pleasure to her lover, who was to be in the audience, but whom she had been unable to discover.

One must be acquainted with the placid everyday life of the Venetians, so devoid of incident that a slight misunderstanding between two lovers, or the temporary deterioration of a singer's voice, is discussed as earnestly as political affairs are discussed in England, to realize the excitement in La Fenice and at the Café Florian. La Tinti in love, La Tinti prevented from displaying all her talents, Genovese's madness, or the vile trick he was playing, under the inspiration of the artistic jealousy which Italians know so well,—what a rich field for animated discussions! The whole pit chattered as men chatter at the Bourse, and the result was an uproar well adapted to surprise a Frenchman accustomed to the calm atmosphere of Parisian theatres. All the boxes were in commotion like hives in which bees are swarming. There was one man, and but one, who took no part in the tumult. Emilio Memmi turned his back on the stage, and, with his eyes fixed

sadly on Massimilla, seemed to live only by her glances; he had not once looked at the singer.

"I have no need, *caro carino*, to ask the result of my negotiation," Vendramin said to Emilio. "Your Massimilla, chaste and religious as she is, was sublimely compliant; in short, she was another La Tinti, was she not?"

The prince replied with a movement of the head instinct with heart-rending melancholy.

"Your love has not deserted the ethereal summits over which you soar," continued Vendramin, excited by his opium; "it has not become materialized. This morning, as on other mornings six months since, you smelt the perfume of the flowers that display their fragrant petals beneath the arches of your immeasurably enlarged skull. Your swollen heart received all your blood, and caused an obstruction in your throat. Ravishing sensations developed here," he said, laying his hand upon Emilio's breast. "Massimilla's voice reached your ears in luminous waves, her hand set free a thousand imprisoned joys, which abandoned the folds of your brain to form a hazy group about you and to bear you away, light of body, clad in purple, to the azure sky above the snow-topped mountains where the pure love of angels dwells. The smile and the kisses of her lips clothed you in a noxious robe which consumed the last vestiges of your earthly nature. Her eyes were two stars which transformed you into shadowless light. You were like two angels prostrate upon celestial palms, waiting until the gates of paradise

should open; but they turned laboriously on their hinges, and in your impatience you struck at them but could not reach them. Your hand met naught but clouds more active than your desire. Your lover, bathed in light and crowned with white roses like a celestial fiancée, wept at your frenzy. Perhaps she repeated melodious prayers to the Virgin, while the devilish lusts of the flesh breathed their infamous counsel into your ears; thereupon you despised the divine fruits of this ecstatic trance in which I live at the expense of my vital forces."

"Your drunken vision, dear Vendramin," said Emilio, calmly, "falls short of the reality. Who could describe that purely physical languor which follows the abuse of the pleasures we have dreamed of, and which leaves to the heart its never-ending desire, to the mind its faculties unimpaired? But I am weary of this torture which enables me to appreciate what Tantalus suffered. This night will be the last of my nights. Having put forth my last effort, I will give back her child to our mother, the Adriatic will receive my last breath—"

"What an idiot you are!" replied Vendramin; "but no, you are mad, for madness, that mental paroxysm which we despise, is the memory of a previous state which becomes confused with our present form. The genius of my dreams has told me these things and many others! You wish to combine the duchess and La Tinti; but take them separately, my dear Emilio: that will be the wiser way. Raphael alone has combined form and idea.

You wish to be Raphael in love; but one cannot create chance. Raphael was a chance hit of the Everlasting Father, who created form and idea hostile to each other; otherwise nothing would live. When the elements are more powerful than the result, nothing is produced. We must be either on earth or in heaven. Remain in heaven, and even then you will return to earth only too soon."

"I will take the duchess home," said the prince, "and risk my last attempt. And then?"

"And then," said Vendramin, hastily, "promise to come to the Florian for me."

"Very well."

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This conversation, being carried on in modern Greek by Vendramin and the prince, who knew that language as many Venetians know it, was not understood by the duchess and the Frenchman. Although quite outside of the circle of interest which contained the duchess, Vendramin, and Emilio,—for the three understood one another perfectly through the medium of the glances they exchanged, shrewd Italian glances, penetrating, veiled, furtive by turns,—the physician eventually discovered a part of the truth. An ardent entreaty addressed by the duchess to Vendramin was the cause of that young Venetian's proposition to Emilio, for La Cataneo had caught scent of the suffering her lover endured in the pure atmosphere in which he had lost his way, although she had not come upon the trail of La Tinti.

"Those two young men are mad," said the physician.

"As to the prince," replied the duchess, "leave his cure to me; as to Vendramin, if he has failed to comprehend this sublime music, he may well be incurable."

"If you would tell me the cause of their madness, I would cure them," rejoined the doctor.

"Since when have great physicians ceased to have the power of divination?" queried the duchess, mockingly.

The ballet had ended long before. The second act of *Moses* began, and the pit paid close attention. There was a rumor that Duke Cataneo had taken Genovese to task, pointing out to him how much injury he was doing Clarina, the *diva* of the day. Everyone anticipated a sublime second act.

"The prince and his father open the scene," said the duchess; "they have yielded once more, heaping insults on the Hebrews, but they are quivering with rage. The father is consoled by his son's approaching marriage, and the son is in despair because of this obstacle to his passion, which, being thwarted on all sides, becomes more violent. Genovese and Carthagenova sing admirably together. You see, the tenor is making his peace with the pit. How well he brings out the richness of the music! The phrase, recited by the son on the tonic, repeated by the father on the dominant, belongs to the simple and solemn system upon which this score is written, the sobriety of the method making the fertility of the music even more astounding. Egypt is put before us to the life. I do not believe that there is any modern composition so instinct with noble dignity. The grave and majestic fatherhood of a king is expressed in that magnificent phrase which is in perfect conformity with the grandeur of style which prevails throughout the work. Surely the son of a Pharaoh pouring out his grief upon his father's bosom until the father himself shares it cannot be more fitly represented than by these stately images. Do you not find in your own mind a sentiment akin

to the splendor which we attribute to this ancient monarchy?"

"It is sublime music!" said the Frenchman.

"The air, *Pace mia smarrita*, which the queen is about to sing, is one of the artificial *bravura* airs which all composers are condemned to introduce, and which mar the general design of the poem; but often their operas would not exist at all if they did not flatter the prima-donna's self-esteem. Nevertheless, this musical sugar-plum is so broadly treated that it is given textually in all theatres. It is so brilliant that prima-donnas never substitute their favorite air for it, as in most operas. Then comes the crowning point of the scene, the duet between Osiris and Elcia in the underground passage, where he proposes to conceal her in order to detach her from the Hebrews who are about to depart, and to fly from Egypt with her. The two lovers are interrupted by the arrival of Aaron, who had gone to warn Amalthea, and we hear the king of quartets: *Mi manca la voce, mi sento morire.* This *mi manca la voce* is one of the masterpieces which will withstand everything, even time, that great destroyer of fashions in music, for it is taken from the language of the heart, which never varies. Mozart has his famous finale of *Don Giovanni*, Marcello his psalm *Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei*, Cimarosa his *Pria chè spunti*, Beethoven his Symphony in *C* minor, Pergolesi his *Stabat;* and Rossini will always retain his *Mi manca la voce.* The marvellous facility with which he varies the form of his work is especially

to be admired in Rossini; to obtain this great effect, he has had recourse to the old method of the canon in unison, to blend all his voices in the same melody. As the form of these sublime *cantileni* was novel, he placed it in an old frame; and to bring it into bolder relief, he omitted all orchestral accompaniment except by the harps. It is impossible to imagine more spirit in the details, more grandeur in the general effect.— Great Heaven! more disturbance!" exclaimed the duchess.

Genovese, who had sung his duo with Carthagenova so admirably, betrayed his animus against La Tinti. He was transformed from a great singer into the most wretched of choristers. The most horrible uproar ensued that ever shook the walls of La Fenice. The tumult yielded only to the voice of La Tinti, who, infuriated by the obstacle placed in her path by Genovese's obstinacy, sang *Mi manca la voce* as no other singer will ever sing it. The enthusiasm reached its highest pitch, the spectators passed from angry excitement to the most intense delight.

"She pours purple floods into my soul," said Capraja, blessing *La Diva Tinti* with extended hand.

"May Heaven exhaust its favors on her head!" cried a gondolier.

"Pharaoh is about to revoke his orders," said the duchess, while the tumult in the pit was subsiding. "Moses will strike him down upon his throne by announcing the death of all the first-born of Egypt,

and singing the air of vengeance which contains the thunders of heaven, and in which the Hebrew clarions ring out. But let me tell you first that it is an air written by Pacini, which Carthagenova substitutes for Rossini's. This air, *Paventa*, will undoubtedly remain in the score; it affords too good an opportunity for the basses to display the richness of their voices, and in this case expression will prevail over science. However, the air is magnificently threatening, so I do not know if we shall be allowed to hear it sung very long."

A salvo of applause and bravos, followed by a profound and prudent silence, welcomed the air; nothing could be more significant or more thoroughly Venetian than that bold outburst, so quickly repressed.

"I will say nothing of the *tempo di marcia* which ushers in the coronation of Osiris, whereby the father seeks to defy Moses's threat: it is enough to listen to it. *Their* famous Beethoven has written nothing more magnificent. Full to overflowing of terrestrial pomp, it forms an admirable contrast to the march of the Hebrews; compare them, and you will see that the music in this instance is inconceivably fertile in resources. Elcia avows her love to the faces of the two leaders of the Hebrews; and renounces it in the beautiful air, *Porge la destra amata*—Bestow upon another thy adored hand.—Ah! what heart-rending sorrow!—Watch the audience!"

"Bravo!" cried the pit, when Genovese was crushed.

"Now we shall hear La Tinti, happily rid of her deplorable companion, sing *O desolata Elcia!* the terrible cavatina in which a love reproved of God shrieks aloud in its despair."

"Where art thou, Rossini, that thou canst not hear the music which thy genius dictated to thee, so magnificently rendered?" said Cataneo.—"Is not Clarina his equal?" he asked Capraja. "To vivify these notes with puffs of flame which, starting from the lungs, are magnified in the air by the addition of some indefinable winged substances which our ears drink in and which exalt us to the sky in an amorous ecstasy, one must be a god!"

"She is like the beautiful Indian plant which springs from the earth, gathers invisible nourishment from the air, and sends forth from its rounded calyx, in a white spiral, clouds of perfume which cause dreams to bloom in our brains," replied Capraja.

La Tinti, being recalled, appeared alone; she received kisses innumerable which the whole audience wafted to her with the tips of their fingers; they threw roses to her, and a wreath to which the women contributed flowers from their bonnets, almost all made by Parisian milliners. A repetition of the cavatina was demanded.

"How impatiently Capraja, the lover of the roulade, awaited this piece, which depends entirely upon the manner of its execution for its value!" said the duchess. "In it Rossini has, so to speak, placed a curb on the rein of the artist's imagination. The

roulade and the singer's frame of mind are everything. With a mediocre voice or execution, it would amount to nothing. The windpipe has to display the brilliant features of this passage. The singer is supposed to express the most poignant of all sorrows, that of a woman who sees her lover die before her eyes! La Tinti, you understand, makes the theatre ring with her highest notes, and, in order to leave full liberty to pure art, to the voice, Rossini has written here some very clear, sharply-defined phrases; by a supreme effort, he invented those heart-rending musical exclamations: *Tormenti! affanni! smanie!*— What outcries! what intense pain in those roulades! La Tinti, you see, has carried the whole audience off its feet by her sublime efforts."

The Frenchman, dumfounded by this amorous frenzy of a whole theatre for the source of its enjoyment, caught a glimpse of Italy as it really is; but neither the duchess nor Vendramin nor Emilio paid the slightest heed to the ovation to La Tinti, who began the cavatina anew. The duchess was afraid that it was the last time she should see her Emilio; as for the prince, in the presence of the duchess, that imposing divinity who bore him up to heaven, he knew not where he was, he did not hear the voluptuous voice of the woman who had initiated him in earthly pleasures, for he was oppressed by a deathly melancholy, and in his ears there was a concert of plaintive voices accompanied by a plashing noise like that of a heavy shower. Vendramin, in the guise of an ancient procurator,

fancied that he was watching the ceremony of the *Bucentaur*. The Frenchman, who had at last divined the existence of a strange and painful mystery between the prince and the duchess, indulged in a multitude of conjectures to explain it to himself. The scene had changed. In the midst of a beautiful stage-setting representing the Desert and the Red Sea, the Egyptians and Hebrews went through their evolutions without diverting the thoughts of the four persons who occupied the box. But, when the first chords of the harps introduced the prayer of the delivered Hebrews, the prince and Vendramin rose and leaned, each against one of the partitions of the box, while the duchess rested her elbow on the velvet rail, and her head on her left hand.

The Frenchman, warned by these movements of the importance attached by the whole audience to this justly famous scene, listened religiously. The entire house joined in demanding a repetition of the prayer, applauding it with boundless enthusiasm.

"It seems to me as if I had been present at the liberation of Italy," thought a Milanese.

"This music raises the bent head, and gives hope to the most benumbed heart!" cried a Roman.

"Now," said the duchess to the Frenchman, whose emotion was visible, "science disappears; inspiration alone dictated this masterpiece, it came from the heart, like a cry of love! As for the accompaniment, it consists of arpeggios on the harps, and the orchestral score is not developed until the last repetition of this celestial theme. Rossini will never rise

higher than in this prayer; he will do quite as well, never better; the sublime always resembles itself, but this hymn is another one of the things which will belong to him alone. The fellow of such a conception can be found only in the psalms of the divine Marcello, a noble Venetian, who is to music what Giotto is to painting. The majesty of the phrase, which as it is unrolled before us presents an inexhaustible source of harmony, equals the broadest inventions of religious geniuses. How simple the method! Moses attacks the theme in *G* minor and closes with a cadenza in *B* flat, which enables the chorus to take it up pianissimo in *B* flat and return with a cadenza to *G* minor. This noble employment of the voices, repeated thrice, ends at the last strophe with a *stretto* in *G* major, the effect of which upon the mind is bewildering. It is as if the hymn of this people, first freed from bondage, as it ascends heavenward, meets other hymns descending from the celestial spheres. The stars respond joyously to the excitement of the delivered earth. The periodic sweep of these motives, the noble stateliness of the slow gradations which lead the way to the grand outburst of the hymn, and its return upon itself, develop celestial images in the mind. Can you not imagine that you see the heavens opening, the angels armed with their golden zithers, the prostrate seraphim waving their perfume-laden censers, and the archangels leaning on their flaming swords which have just overthrown the impious? The secret of this harmony, which refreshes the thought, is, I believe, the secret of certain very rare

human works: it casts us for a moment into infinity, we are conscious of it, we obtain glimpses of it in these melodies which know no bounds, like those that are sung around God's throne. Rossini's genius leads us to a prodigious height. Thence we descry a promised land where our eyes, caressed by celestial rays, can discover no horizon. The last cry of Elcia, now almost cured, connects an earthly passion with this hymn of gratitude. This cantilena is a stroke of genius.

"Sing!" exclaimed the duchess, as she heard the last strophe executed, as it was listened to, with gloomy enthusiasm; "sing, you are free!"

This last word was pronounced in a tone which made the physician start; and, to distract the duchess from her bitter thoughts, he challenged her, during the commotion aroused by La Tinti's recalls, to one of those discussions in which the French excel.

"Madame," he said, "while explaining this masterpiece, which, thanks to you, I shall come to see to-morrow with a full understanding both of its methods and its effects, you have frequently spoken of the color of music and of what music paints; but, speaking as an analyst and a materialist, I will confess that I am always disgusted by the attempt of some enthusiasts to make us believe that music paints with sounds. Is it not as if Raphael's admirers should claim that he sings with colors?"

"In musical language," the duchess replied, "to paint is to awake certain memories in our hearts or certain images in our minds by certain sounds, and

these memories, these images have their color, they are bright or dull. You simply cavil over words, that is all. According to Capraja, each instrument has its mission and appeals to certain ideas, as each color corresponds to certain of our emotions. When you are looking at gilt arabesques on a blue ground, do you have the same thoughts that red arabesques on a black or green ground arouse? In neither style of painting are there any figures, any sentiments expressed; it is pure art, and yet nobody can remain unmoved while looking at them. Has not the hautboy, like almost all wind-instruments, the power of evoking images of the country in all minds? Is there not something warlike in the sound of the brasses, do they not develop in us sensations that are not only acute but somewhat hysterical? And the strings, whose substance is derived from living creatures—do not they attack the most sensitive fibres of our organization, do they not go to the very bottom of our hearts? When I spoke of the gloomy coloring, of the lack of warmth of the notes employed in the introduction to *Moses*, did I not use as apt a figure as your critics who talk of the color of such and such a writer? Do you not recognize the nervous style, the animated style, the colorless style, the highly-colored style? Art paints with words, with sounds, with colors, with lines, with forms; though its methods are various, its effects are the same. An Italian architect may arouse in us the same sensation that is aroused by the introduction to *Moses*, by leading us through dark, damp avenues lined by

tall, dense trees, and bringing us suddenly face to face with a valley full of streams and flowers and factories, and bathed in sunlight. In their most imposing efforts, the arts are simply the expression of the great spectacles of nature. I am not learned enough to enter into the philosophy of music; go and question Capraja, you will be surprised at what he will tell you. According to him, each instrument, having the endurance, the breath, or the hand of man to give it its full expression, is as superior as language to color, which is invariable, and to speech, which has limits. The language of music is infinite, it contains everything and can express everything. Now do you know wherein consists the superiority of the work you have heard? I will explain it to you in a few words. There are two kinds of music: one paltry, pitiful, second-rate, always the same, based upon a bare hundred phrases which every musician appropriates to himself, and constituting a sort of chatter more or less agreeable, upon which the majority of composers subsist; we listen to their songs, their so-called melodies, we derive more or less pleasure from them, but we retain absolutely nothing of them in our memory; a hundred years pass and they are forgotten. The nations, from the earliest antiquity down to our own day, have preserved, as a precious treasure, certain songs which epitomize their manners and customs, I may almost say their history. Listen to one of these national hymns,—the Gregorian Chant was the heir of the earlier peoples in respect to this form of

composition,—and you fall into profound reveries, vast, incredible images succeed one another in your mind, despite the simplicity of these rudimentary works, these musical ruins. There are one or two men of genius, not more, in each century, the Homers of music, to whom God gives the power to anticipate the future, and who construct these melodies overflowing with things done, pregnant with stupendous poems. Reflect hereon, and remember this thought; it will bear fruit when repeated by you: it is melody, not harmony, which has the power of surviving through the ages. The music of this oratorio contains a multitude of these grand and sacred things. A work which begins with such an introduction and ends with this prayer is immortal, as truly as the *O filii et filiæ* of Easter, as the *Dies iræ* of Death, as all the hymns which, in all countries, outlive splendor, joy, and prosperity."

Two tears which the duchess wiped away as she left the box, said plainly enough that she was thinking of Venice, and Vendramin kissed her hand.

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The performance ended with a concert of the most original maledictions, with a storm of hisses for Genovese and a paroxysm of wild excitement in favor of La Tinti. Not for years had the Venetians witnessed a scene of greater animation; their existence was enlivened at last by the antagonism which is never lacking in Italy, where the smallest town is always kept alive by the opposing interests of two factions: Guelphs and Ghibellines everywhere, the families of Capulet and Montague at Verona, of Geremeï and Lomelli at Bologna, of Fieschi and Doria at Genoa, the patricians and the plebs, the senate and the tribunes of the Roman republic, the houses of Pazzi and Medici at Florence, of Sforza and Visconti at Milan, of Orsini and Colonna at Rome,—in a word, at all times and in all places the same tendency. Already there were Genovesists and Tintists in the streets. The prince attended the duchess, who was more than saddened by Osiris's unhappy love; she had a foreboding of some similar catastrophe to herself, and could only strain Emilio to her heart, as if to keep him with her.

"Remember your promise," said Vendramin; "I will wait for you on the square."

Vendramin took the Frenchman's arm and suggested that they walk on the square of Saint Mark while awaiting the prince.

"I shall be overjoyed if he does not come," he said.

That remark was the starting-point of a conversation between the Frenchman and Vendramin; the latter thought at that moment that it would be advisable to consult a physician, and he described Emilio's strange predicament. The Frenchman did what Frenchmen do on all occasions, he began to laugh. Vendramin, who considered it an exceedingly serious matter, lost his temper; but his wrath was appeased when the pupil of Magendie, Cuvier, Dupuytren, and Broussais told him that he believed that he could cure the prince of his excessive happiness, and dissipate the divine poesy with which he surrounded the duchess as with a cloud.

"Fortunate misfortune!" he exclaimed. "The ancients, who were not such fools as their glass sky and their ideas in physics would lead us to suppose, intended to describe in their fable of Ixion this power which nullifies the body and makes the mind supreme in everything."

At that moment, they saw Genovese approaching, accompanied by the imaginative Capraja. The musical fanatic was intensely anxious to know the real cause of the *fiasco*. The tenor, when the question was put to him, talked wildly, like those men who are made drunk by the violence of the ideas which a passion suggests to them.

"Yes, signor, I love her, I adore her with a frenzy of which I deemed myself no longer capable after wearing myself out with women. Women injure

art too much for a man to indulge in dissipation and work at the same time. Clara thinks that I am jealous of her success, and that I wished to prevent her triumph at Venice; but I applauded her in the wings, and I shouted *Diva!* louder than the whole audience."

"But," said Cataneo, coming up at that moment, "that doesn't explain how you were transformed from a divine singer into the most execrable of all the wretches who emit air through their windpipes without imparting to it the enchanting sweetness which delights our hearts."

"I a poor singer," exclaimed the virtuoso, "I, who am the peer of the greatest masters!"

The group, consisting of the French physician, Vendramin, Capraja, Cataneo, and Genovese, had walked as far as the Piazzetta. It was midnight. The glistening bay, outlined by the churches of Saint George and Saint Paul, at the end of the Giudecca, and by the beginning of the Grand Canal, so mysteriously opened by the *dogana*, and by the church dedicated to Maria della Salute—that magnificent bay was perfectly calm. The moon illuminated the vessels by the bank of the *Esclavons*. The gulf of Venice, which is subjected to none of the agitation of the sea, seemed alive, the myriad reflections on its surface sparkled so merrily. Never did singer stand upon a more magnificent stage. Genovese invoked the attention of sea and sky by an emphatic gesture; then, with no other accompaniment than the murmuring of the waves, he sang the

air *Ombra adorata*, Crescentini's masterpiece. That air, floating upward between the statues of Saint Theodore and Saint George, in the heart of deserted, moonlit Venice; the words, so perfectly in harmony with the scene; and Genovese's melancholy expression—all combined to vanquish Frenchmen and Italians alike. At the first notes, Vendramin's face was bathed with great tears. Capraja was as motionless as one of the statues in the ducal palace. Cataneo seemed to feel a thrill of emotion. The Frenchman, taken by surprise, reflected like a scholar impressed by a phenomenon which shatters one of his fundamental axioms. These four minds, who differed so widely, whose hopes were so meagre, who believed in nothing for themselves or after themselves, but who admitted for their own satisfaction that they were ephemeral and capricious forms, like a blade of grass or an insect, caught a glimpse of heaven. Never did music better deserve the epithet divine. The comforting sounds that issued from that throat surrounded their hearts with soft, caressing clouds. These clouds, half visible like the marble roofs around them silvered by the moon, seemed to serve as seats for angels whose wings expressed adoration and love by a devout movement. The simple, artless melody, penetrating the inward senses, carried light thither. How sanctified was passion! But what a pitiful awakening the tenor's vanity had in store for these noble emotions!

"Am I a poor singer?" said Genovese, after he had finished the air.

One and all regretted that the instrument was not a celestial thing. Was that angelic music attributable solely to a feeling of wounded self-esteem? The singer felt nothing, he was no more thinking of the religious sentiments, the divine images which he created in their hearts, than the violin knows what Paganini makes it say. They had all fancied that they saw Venice raising her shroud and singing herself, yet it was simply a matter of a tenor's fiasco!

"Can you divine the meaning of such a phenomenon?" the physician asked Capraja, wishing to induce the man to talk whom the duchess had described as a profound thinker.

"What phenomenon?" said Capraja.

"That Genovese, who is so fine when La Tinti is not on the stage, changes into a braying ass in her presence."

"He acts in obedience to a secret law, the mathematical demonstration of which one of your chemists can give, perhaps, and which the next century will find stated in a formula full of X and A and B, mingled with little algebraic symbols, signs, and lines which give me the colic, for the greatest discoveries in mathematics do not add materially to the sum total of our enjoyment. When an artist is so unfortunate as to be full to overflowing of the passion he seeks to express, he is unable to express it, for it is the thing itself instead of its image. Art proceeds from the brain, not from the heart. When your subject dominates you, you are its slave, not its master. You are like a king besieged by his

people. To feel too keenly at the moment when it is time to act, is the revolt of the feelings against the faculty!"

"Would it not be well for us to convince ourselves of this by another experiment?" queried the physician.

"Cataneo, you can bring your tenor and your prima-donna together," said Capraja to his friend.

"Come to sup with me, gentlemen," said the duke. "We must reconcile Clarina and the tenor. Otherwise the season in Venice will be wasted."

The offer was accepted.

"Gondoliers!" cried Cataneo.

"One moment," Vendramin said to the duke; "Memmi is waiting for me at the Florian; I don't want to leave him alone. Let us make him tipsy to-night, or he will kill himself to-morrow."

"*Corpo santo!*" cried the duke, "I desire to preserve that excellent young man for the happiness and future welfare of my family. I will invite him."

They all repaired to the Florian, where the crowd of habitués was engaged in stormy and excited discussion, which ceased at sight of the tenor. In a corner, near one of the windows looking on the square, stood the prince, with a gloomy countenance, eyes fixed on vacancy, motionless as a statue, —a ghastly image of despair.

"That madman," said the doctor to Vendramin, "doesn't know what he wants! There is in the world one man who can separate a Massimilla Doni from the rest of creation, possessing her in heaven,

amid the imaginary splendor which no power on earth can realize. He can see his mistress always sublime and pure, he can always hear within himself what we have just listened to by the seashore, he can live always under the fire of two eyes which create about him the warm, golden atmosphere with which Titian has surrounded the Virgin in his *Assumption*, and which Raphael first invented, by favor of some revelation, for his *Transfiguration of Christ;* and this man aspires simply to besmirch this poesy! Through my ministrations, he will combine his carnal love and his celestial love in that one woman! In fact, he will do like the rest of us, he will have a mistress. The poor fellow possessed a divinity; he wishes to make a woman of her! I tell you, monsieur, he will renounce Heaven, and I will not promise that he may not die of despair later. O ye female faces, gracefully outlined by a pure and luminous oval, who recall the creations wherein art has contended victoriously with nature! ye divine feet which cannot walk, slender waists which an earthly breeze would break, willowy forms which will never conceive; ye virgins dimly seen by us as we emerge from childhood, admired in secret, adored without hope, enveloped in the beams of some unwearying desire, ye whom we never see again but whose smile pervades our whole existence—what Epicurean swine ever sought to plunge you into earthly mire! Ah! monsieur, the sun shines and gives warmth on earth only because it is thirty-three million leagues away; go toward it, and science

warns you that it is neither warm nor luminous; for science is of some use," he added, glancing at Capraja.

"Not bad for a French doctor!" said Capraja, tapping the foreigner's shoulder lightly. "You have just explained what Europe understands least in Dante, his *Bice!* Yes, Beatrice, that ideal figure, the queen of the poet's fancies, chosen from the whole world, consecrated by tears, deified by memory, constantly rejuvenated by ungratified desires!"

"Prince," said the duke in Emilio's ear, "come to sup with me. When you rob a poor Neapolitan of his wife and his mistress, you can refuse him nothing."

This Neapolitan buffoonery, uttered with aristocratic courtesy, extorted a smile from Emilio, who suffered himself to be taken by the arm and led away. The duke had begun by sending one of the waiters from the café to his house. As the Memmi palace was on the Grand Canal, in the direction of Santa Maria della Salute, it was necessary either to walk around by the Rialto, or to go in gondolas; but the party did not wish to separate, and they all preferred to walk through Venice. The duke's infirmities, however, compelled him to make use of his gondola.

Whoever had passed the Memmi palace about two in the morning would have seen it vomiting light upon the Grand Canal through all its windows, and would have heard the beautiful overture to *Semiramide* performed at the foot of the steps by the

orchestra from La Fenice, which was serenading La Tinti. The guests were at table in the gallery on the second floor. Standing on the balcony, La Tinti sang, by way of thanks, Almaviva's *Buona Sera*, while the duke's steward distributed his master's largess among the poor artistes, and invited them to dinner on the following day; courtesies obligatory upon great noblemen who protect songstresses, and great ladies who protect singers. Under such circumstances, one must marry the whole theatre. Cataneo did things handsomely, he was the manager's *croupier*, and that season cost him two thousand crowns. He had brought furniture of a palatial style, had sent for a French cook, and wines of all countries. You can believe, therefore, that the supper was a royal feast.

Seated beside La Tinti, the prince felt keenly, throughout the supper, what poets call in all languages the darts of love. The image of the sublime Massimilla grew dim, as the idea of God is sometimes overshadowed by clouds of doubt in the minds of solitary scholars. La Tinti deemed herself the most fortunate woman on earth, seeing that Emilio loved her; as she was sure of possessing him, she was all aflame with a joy which was reflected on her face; her beauty was so resplendent that each guest, as he emptied his glass, could not refrain from offering her a salute of admiration.

"The duchess is not La Tinti's equal," said the physician, forgetting his theory beneath the fire of the Sicilian's eyes.

The tenor ate and drank slowly; he seemed desirous to identify himself with the prima-donna's life, and lost that gross sense of pleasure which distinguishes Italian singers.

"Come, signorina," said the duke, with a glance of entreaty at La Tinti, "and you, *caro primo uomo*," he said to Genovese, "blend your voices in a perfect accord. Sing the *C* in *Qual portento*, at the coming of the light in the oratorio, to convince my old friend Capraja of the superiority of the accord to the roulade!"

"I propose to triumph over this prince whom she loves," said Genovese to himself; "for she adores him, you can see it in her eyes!"

Imagine the surprise of the guests who had listened to Genovese by the seashore, when they heard him bray, coo, mew, snarl, gurgle, bellow, thunder, bark, yell, and even produce sounds which can be described only as a dull rattle,—in short, play an incomprehensible comedy while presenting to their astonished eyes an exalted and sublime expression like those of the martyrs painted by Zurbaran, Murillo, Titian, and Raphael. The laugh that escaped from each one changed into almost tragic seriousness the moment they realized that Genovese was acting in good faith. La Tinti seemed to understand that the tenor loved her, and that he had told the truth on the stage, the home of falsehood.

"*Poverino!*" she murmured, patting the prince's hand under the table.

"*Per Dio Santò!*" cried Capraja, "will you tell me what score you are reading at this moment, you

murderer of Rossini! In God's name, tell us what is happening inside of you, what devil is fighting in your windpipe?"

"The devil!" replied Genovese; "say, rather, the god of music. My eyes, like Saint Cecilia's, see angels who motion to me to follow one by one the notes of the score, written in characters of fire, and I try to struggle with them. *Per Dio!* do you not understand me? the passion which inspired me has permeated my whole being, my heart and my lungs. My heart and my throat make but one breath. Have you never, in a dream, listened to sublime music, thoughts of unknown composers who employ the pure sound which nature has implanted in everything, and which we awaken with more or less success by the instruments with which we compose elaborate pieces; but which, in those supernatural concerts, stands forth free from the imperfections with which human performers mar its beauty, for they cannot be all sentiment, all soul?—very good; I produce these marvellous sounds for you, and you curse me! You are as mad as the pit of La Fenice, which hissed me. I despised that vulgar crowd for not ascending with me the lofty peak from which one can wield dominion over art, and it is only for noteworthy men, a Frenchman— Ah! he has gone!"

"Half an hour ago," said Vendramin.

"So much the worse! perhaps he would have understood me, since you dignified Italians, enamored of art, do not understand me."

"There, there, there!" said Capraja, patting the

tenor's head, with a smile, "gallop away on the divine Ariosto's hippogriff; run after your brilliant chimeras, you musical *teriaki!*"

In truth, the guests, being convinced that Genovese was tipsy, let him talk on without listening to him. Capraja alone understood the question propounded by the Frenchman.

While the wine of Cyprus unloosed every tongue and each guest pranced about on his favorite hobby, the physician awaited the duchess in a gondola, after sending in to her a note written by Vendramin. Massimilla hastened down in her night-clothes, so alarmed was she by the prince's adieus, and surprised by the hopes held out by this letter.

"Madame," said the physician, motioning to her to be seated and to the gondoliers to start, "Emilio Memmi's life hangs in the balance at this moment, and you alone can save it."

"What must I do?" she asked.

"Ah! will you resign yourself to play an infamous part, notwithstanding the noblest face that one can find in Italy to admire? Will you descend from the blue heaven where you now are to a courtesan's bed? In a word, O sublime angel, O pure and stainless beauty, will you consent to divine what the love of La Tinti is, beneath her roof, and in such a way as to deceive the passionate Emilio, whom, however, the fumes of wine will have made far from clear-sighted?"

"Is that all?" she said, smiling, and disclosing to the astonished Frenchman a corner, hitherto

unnoticed by him, of the enchanting character of the loving Italian. "I will surpass La Tinti, if need be, to save my friend's life."

"And you will blend in a single love two loves that are now separated in him by a mountain of poesy which will melt like the ice of a glacier beneath the rays of the sun in summer."

"I shall be under eternal obligations to you," said the duchess, gravely.

When the Frenchman returned to the gallery, where the debauch had assumed the character of true Venetian madness, his face wore a joyous expression, which escaped the prince, who was fascinated by La Tinti, promising himself a reward of the intoxicating bliss he had already tasted at her hands. La Tinti, like a true Sicilian, was swimming in the emotions of an amorous caprice on the point of being gratified. The Frenchman whispered a few words in Vendramin's ear, and La Tinti became uneasy.

"What are you plotting?" she asked the prince's friend.

"Are you a good girl?" the physician whispered to her, with the stern air of an operator.

The question entered the poor girl's understanding as a dagger enters the heart.

"It is a question of saving Emilio's life," said Vendramin.

"Come," said the physician to the singer.

The poor creature rose and went to the end of the table, between Vendramin and the physician, where

she seemed like a criminal between her confessor and the headsman. She struggled a long time, but yielded at last through love for Emilio. The physician's last words were:

"And you will cure Genovese!"

La Tinti said a word to the tenor as she walked around the table. She returned to the prince, put her arm about his neck, kissed his hair with a look of despair which impressed Vendramin and the doctor, the only two who had their reason; then she rushed into her bedroom. Emilio, seeing that Genovese had left the table, and that Cataneo was deep in a long musical discussion with Capraja, stole toward the door of La Tinti's bedroom, raised the portière, and disappeared like an eel in the mud.

"Well, Cataneo," said Capraja, "you have demanded of physical pleasure all that it had to give, and here you are hanging to life by a thread, like a pasteboard harlequin, riddled with scars, and not moving unless someone pulls the thread of a perfect accord."

"But are not you yourself in the same state, Capraja, you who have demanded everything from the fancy, and who live astride a roulade?"

"Me, I possess the whole world!" said Capraja, putting forth his hand with a kingly gesture.

"And I have devoured it!" rejoined the duke.

They noticed that Vendramin and the physician had gone, and that they were alone.

The next day, after the most blissful of blissful nights, the prince's slumber was disturbed by a

dream. He felt upon his breast pearls dropped there by an angel; he awoke to find himself bathed by the tears of Massimilla Doni, in whose arms he lay, and who was watching him while he slept.

That evening at La Fenice, Genovese, although his comrade La Tinti had not allowed him to rise until two o'clock in the afternoon,—which, they say, injures a tenor voice,—sang his rôle in *Semiramide* divinely; he was recalled with La Tinti, more wreaths were presented, the pit was drunk with joy, the tenor no longer sought to fascinate the primadonna by the charms of an angelic method.

Vendramin was the only one whom the physician could not cure. Love of a country which has ceased to exist is an incurable passion. The young Venetian, by dint of living in his thirteenth-century Republic, of lying with the noble courtesan brought to him by opium, and of returning to real life as a consequence of physical prostration, succumbed at last, mourned and cherished by his friends.

How shall we tell the climax of this adventure, for it was shockingly commonplace? One word will suffice for worshippers of the *ideal.*

The duchess was *enceinte.*

The peris, nymphs, fairies, sylphs of the olden time, the Muses of Greece, the marble Virgins of Certosa of Pavia, the Day and Night of Michael Angelo, the little Angels that Bellini first drew at the foot of church paintings, and to whom Raphael gave such divine form at the foot of the *Virgin au donataire,* and of the Madonna freezing at Dresden,

Orcagna's captivating maidens in the church of San-Michele at Florence, the heavenly choirs on the tomb of Saint Sebald at Nuremberg, several Virgins in the Duomo at Milan, the hordes of a hundred Gothic cathedrals, the whole nation of figures who ruin their shapes to come to you, O all-embracing artists —all these angelic incorporeal maidens rushed to Massimilla's bed and wept there.

Paris, May 25, 1839.

THE ACCURSED CHILD

TO MADAME LA BARONNE JAMES DE ROTHSCHILD

I

HOW THE MOTHER LIVED

*

On a winter's night, about two o'clock, Comtesse Jeanne d'Hérouville was seized with such sharp pains that, despite her inexperience, she felt certain that her confinement was close at hand; and the instinct which impels us to seek greater comfort in a change of posture led her to sit up in bed, either to study the nature of the unfamiliar pains, or to reflect upon her situation. She was assailed by cruel apprehensions, caused not so much by the perils of a first confinement, at which most women take fright, as by the perils which awaited the child. To avoid waking her husband, who was lying by her side, the poor woman took precautions which, owing to her profound terror, were as minute as those of a prisoner attempting to escape. But though the pains became more and more intense, she ceased to feel them, her faculties were so entirely absorbed by the difficult task of resting her moist hands on the pillow in order to relieve her suffering body from a position in which she seemed utterly helpless. At the slightest rustling of the vast green silk counterpane, beneath which she had passed many a sleepless night since her marriage, she stopped abruptly, as if she

had touched a bell. Being compelled to watch her husband, she divided her attention between the screaking silk and a broad, swarthy face whose long moustache brushed her shoulder. If her husband's lips emitted an overloud breath, it aroused a sudden fear which heightened the brilliancy of the flush with which her twofold anguish overspread her cheeks. The criminal who has crept to the door of his cell at dead of night, and tries to turn noiselessly in a pitiless lock the key that he has found, displays the same trembling boldness. When the countess at last attained a sitting posture without awakening her lord and master, she indulged in a gesture of childish joy which revealed the touching ingenuousness of her character; but the smile half formed upon her burning lips quickly vanished; a thought darkened her pure brow, and her long blue eyes resumed their sad expression. She uttered a sigh, and replaced her hands, not without careful precautions, on the fateful conjugal pillow. Then, as if she were free to think and act for the first time since her marriage, she glanced at the objects about her, extending her neck with a quick movement like that of a bird in its cage. Seeing her thus, one could readily divine that she had formerly been all joy and heedless vivacity, but that destiny had suddenly mown down her early hopes, and changed her artless gayety to melancholy.

The room was one of those which, even in our day, octogenarian concierges exhibit to travellers who visit old chateaus, with: "This is the State

bedroom in which Louis XIII. lay." Beautiful tapestries, generally dark in tone, were framed in broad walnut borders, the delicate carving of which was blackened by time. The timbers of the ceiling formed panels decorated with arabesques in the style of the preceding century, and still retaining the natural coloring of the chestnut. This decoration, in which dark tones predominated, reflected the light so poorly that it was difficult to distinguish its design, although the sun shone brightly into the lofty and spacious room. In like manner, the silver lamp standing on the mantel-shelf of an enormous fireplace cast such a feeble light that its flickering gleam might be compared to the hazy stars which at times pierce the grayish veil of an autumn night. The figures carved upon the marble face of the mantel, which was opposite the countess's bed, presented such a hideously grotesque aspect that she dared not let her eyes rest upon them; she feared that she should see them move, or hear an outburst of laughter from their yawning, distorted mouths.

At the moment, a fierce storm was howling in the chimney, which repeated its every gust, imparting to it a doleful meaning, and the size of the flue so facilitated the communication between the hearth and the outer air that the burning logs seemed to have a sort of respiration, they blazed up and went out again and again at the bidding of the wind. The crest of the D'Hérouville family, carved in white marble, with all its mantles and the figures of its supporters, gave the aspect of a tomb to this species

of edifice, which formed a fit companion to the bed, another monument reared to the glory of Hymen. A modern architect would have been sorely puzzled to determine whether the bed had been made for the room, or the room for the bed. Two Cupids, sporting upon a canopy of walnut carved to represent garlands of flowers, might have passed for angels, and the columns of the same wood, which supported this dome, presented mythological allegories, the explanation of which could be found in the Bible or in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Take away the bed, and the canopy would have been equally appropriate over the pulpit or the church-wardens' pew in a church. The husband and wife mounted three steps to enter this sumptuous couch, which was surrounded by a platform and supplied with curtains of green silk with enormous designs in brilliant colors, called *ramages*, perhaps because the birds they represent are supposed to sing.* The folds of these great curtains were so stiff that at night one would have mistaken the silk for a sheet of metal. To the green velvet, adorned with gold fringe, which formed the head-board of this seignorial bed, the superstition of the D'Hérouvilles had attached a large crucifix, upon which their chaplain placed a fresh piece of boxwood on Palm Sunday, when he renewed the holy water in the carved basin at the foot of the cross.

On one side of the fireplace was a wardrobe of rare wood, magnificently carved, which the young

**Ramage*, in addition to the meaning of flowered or leaf work, means the song or twitter of birds.

couple received in the provinces on their wedding-day. These old wardrobes, so highly prized by the antiquarians of to-day, were the arsenals from which the ladies produced the treasures of their rich and elegant costumes: they contained laces, skirts, collars, valuable dresses, purses, masks, gloves, veils, all the inventions of sixteenth-century coquetry. On the other side, for symmetry's sake, stood a similar piece of furniture, in which the countess kept her books, her papers, and her jewels. Antique damask-covered easy-chairs, a large greenish mirror made at Venice and richly framed in a sort of portable toilet-stand, completed the furniture of the bedroom. The floor was covered with a Persian carpet, whose magnificence attested the count's gallantry. On the uppermost of the steps leading to the bed was a small table upon which the maid, every evening, served in a cup of gold or silver a beverage prepared with spices.

When we have taken a few steps in life, we recognize the secret influence exerted by localities upon the disposition of the mind. In whose experience have there not been evil moments when some pledges of hope were discernible in surrounding objects? Happy or wretched, man imparts a physiognomy to the most trivial objects with which he lives; he listens to them and consults them, so superstitious is he by nature. At this moment, the countess looked about at all the pieces of furniture as if they were living beings; she seemed to be appealing to them for help or protection;

but all that gloomy magnificence seemed to her inexorable.

Suddenly the storm redoubled its force. The young woman dared look upon nothing as of favorable augury when she heard the threatening voice of the heavens, whose changes, in that age of credulity, were interpreted to suit the ideas or habits of each person's mind. She suddenly turned her eyes upon two ogive windows at the end of the room; but the small size of the panes and the multiplicity of leaden divisions made it impossible for her to see the condition of the sky and to determine whether the end of the world was at hand, as some monks, hungry for gifts, asserted. She might readily have given credit to these predictions, for the roar of the angry sea, whose waves assailed the walls of the château, swelled the loud voice of the tempest, and the very cliffs seemed to tremble. Although the pains grew constantly more intense and excruciating, the countess dared not arouse her husband; but she scrutinized his features, as if despair impelled her to seek there some ray of comfort amid such a multitude of sinister omens.

Depressing as the young woman's surroundings were, that face, notwithstanding the tranquillity of sleep, seemed even more depressing than all else. The light of the lamp which was gradually dying by the bedside flickered unsteadily in the gusts of wind and lighted up the count's face only at intervals, so that its movements over that face in repose simulated the struggles of a tempestuous thought. The

countess could hardly convince herself of the real cause of the phenomenon. Each time that a gust of wind projected the light upon that great head, shading the numerous bumps that marked it, it seemed to her that her husband was about to fix his eyes upon her with a glare of intolerable ferocity. Implacable as the conflict then waging between the Church and Calvinism, the count's brow was threatening even in sleep; numerous furrows due to the excitement of a warlike life imparted to it a vague resemblance to the vermiculated stones of which the monuments of that age are constructed; hair prematurely gray, like the white moss that grows upon aged oaks, surrounded that brow, but endowed it with no grace, and religious intolerance there displayed its fierce brutality. An aquiline nose which resembled the beak of a bird of prey, the black, wrinkled circles around a yellow eye, the bones protruding in the emaciated cheeks, the rigidity of the deep wrinkles, the disdain stamped upon the lower lip, all combined to indicate a despotic nature, and a strength of will the more to be feared because the narrowness of the skull pointed to absolute lack of intelligence and an ungenerous courage. The face was horribly disfigured by a broad scar across the right cheek, where it formed a sort of second mouth. At the age of thirty-three, the count, eager to make a name for himself in the unhappy religious war for which the signal was given by the Saint Bartholomew, was severely wounded at the siege of La Rochelle. The mischance of his wound, to use the language

of the time, increased his hatred for the partisans of the Reformed religion; but, naturally enough, he also included all men with handsome faces in his antipathy. Even before the catastrophe, he was so ugly that no woman would consent to receive his attentions. The only passion of his youth was for a famous woman called the *Fair Roman.* The distrust due to this added impairment of his beauty made him so sensitive that he no longer deemed it possible to inspire a genuine passion; and his disposition became so fierce, that, whatever success he may have had in gallantry, he owed to the terror inspired by his cruelty.

The redoubtable Catholic's left hand, which was outside of the bedclothes, completed the delineation of his character. That enormous hand, stretched out as if to cling to the countess as a miser clings to his treasure, was covered with such an abundance of hair, it displayed such a network of protruding veins and muscles, that it resembled the branch of a beech-tree surrounded by the stalks of a withered ivy. A child, upon looking at the count's face, would have recognized in him one of the ogres of whom blood-curdling tales are told them by their nurses. The length and breadth of the space he occupied in bed sufficed to indicate his gigantic proportions. His thick gray eyebrows concealed the lids in such a way as to heighten the brilliancy of the eye, in which gleamed the luminous ferocity of the eye of a wolf lying in wait among the underbrush. Beneath his lion's nose, two great moustaches, quite unkempt,—for he had a strange contempt for matters of the

toilet,—concealed the upper lip. Luckily for the countess, her husband's vast mouth was silent at that moment, for the softest notes of that hoarse voice always made her shudder. Although the count was barely fifty years old, one might easily take him for sixty at first sight, such inroads had the fatigues of war made upon his features, without impairing his robust constitution; but he had very little desire to be looked upon as a *mignon*.

The countess, who was just completing her eighteenth year, offered a distressing contrast to that huge figure. She was fair and slender. Her chestnut hair, tinged with gold, played upon her neck like brown clouds, and outlined one of those refined faces which Carlo Dolci invented for his ivory-white Madonnas, who seem on the point of expiring under the assaults of physical pain. You would have said that she was an angelic apparition whose mission it was to soften the will of the Comte d'Hérouville.

"No! he will not kill us!" she cried, mentally, after gazing long at her husband. "Is he not sincere, noble, brave, and true to his word?"

"True to his word?"—As she repeated this phrase in her thought, she started convulsively, then sat as if stupefied.

To understand the horror of the situation in which the countess was placed, it is necessary to add that this nocturnal scene took place in 1591, when civil war reigned in France, and the laws were without force. The excesses of the League, which was opposed to the accession of Henri IV., surpassed all

the calamities of the religious wars. The prevailing license reached such a height that no one was surprised when a great nobleman caused his enemy to be murdered publicly, in broad daylight. When a military expedition, undertaken to serve some private interest, was carried on in the name of the League or of the king, it was loudly praised on both sides. It was in this way that Balagny, a soldier, very nearly became a sovereign prince at the gates of France. As for murders committed *en famille*, if we may be allowed to use the expression, people paid no more heed to them, says a contemporary, than to a bale of straw, unless the attendant circumstances were altogether too inhuman. Some time before the death of King Henri III., a lady of the court killed a gentleman who had made some slanderous remarks concerning her. One of the king's *mignons* said to him:

"*Vive-Dieu!* sire, she stabbed him right neatly!"

By such rigorous procedure, the Comte d'Hérouville, one of the most fanatical Royalists in Normandie, held under obedience to Henri IV. all that part of the province which bordered on Bretagne. He was the head of one of the wealthiest families of France, and had increased his revenues materially by his marriage, seven months before the night on which this narrative commences, with Jeanne de Saint-Savin, a young woman who, by a coincidence not uncommon in those days, when people died like flies, had unexpectedly become entitled to the estates of both branches of the family of Saint-Savin.

Necessity and fear were the sole witnesses of that marriage. At a banquet given, two months later, by the town of Bayeux to the count and countess, in commemoration of their union, a discussion arose which, in that age of ignorance, was considered very absurd; it related to the alleged legitimacy of children born ten months after the husband's death, or seven months after the wedding-night.

"Madame," said the count, roughly, to his wife, "as for you presenting me with a child ten months after my death, I can't help that. But don't begin by lying-in at seven months!"

"Why, what would you do, old bear?" inquired the young Marquis de Verneuil, thinking that the count was in jest.

"I would wring the mother's neck and the child's at short notice."

That peremptory reply put an end to the discussion, which was imprudently started by a nobleman of Lower Normandie. The guests held their peace, and glanced with a sort of terror at the Comtesse d'Hérouville. All were convinced that, if the thing should happen, that savage nobleman would carry out his threat.

The count's words rang in the breast of the young woman, who was *enceinte* at the time; instantly, one of those presentiments which pierce the mind like a lightning-flash illuminating the future told her that she would lie in at seven months. A hot wave enveloped her inwardly from head to feet, concentrating her vitality at the heart with such violence

that she felt externally as if she were in an ice-cold bath. Thereafter, not a day passed that a thrill of secret terror did not check the most innocent impulses of her heart. The memory of the expression and intonation which accompanied the count's decree still froze her blood and imposed silence on her suffering as she leaned over that sleeping face, seeking to find there during its slumber some indications of a compassion which she sought in vain during its waking hours. As the child, threatened with death before its birth, made a vigorous movement as if demanding light, she exclaimed in a voice which resembled a sigh:

"Poor dear!"

She did not finish; there are thoughts which a mother cannot endure. Incapable of reasoning at that moment, the countess was suffocated, as it were, by an agony which she had never before known. Two tears escaped from her eyes, trickled slowly down her cheeks, leaving two glistening lines, and clung tremblingly to the lower curve of her pale face, like two drops of dew on the edge of a lily. What scholar would dare to say that the unborn child exists upon neutral ground, where the mother's emotions do not reach it in those hours when the soul embraces the body and communicates its impressions to it, when the thought infiltrates the blood with healing balms or poisonous fluids? Did this dread which shook the tree disturb the fruit? Were the words: "Poor dear!" a judgment dictated by visions of the future? The mother's convulsive

motion was very violent and her glance was very piercing!

The murderous reply to which the count had given vent was a mysterious link between his wife's past and this premature lying-in. His hateful suspicions, expressed so publicly, had implanted in the countess's memory the terror which echoed in her future. Since that fatal banquet, she endeavored to dispel, with a dread equal to the pleasure with which another woman would have evoked them, a multitude of pictures, scattered through her past years, which her vivid imagination often brought before her despite her efforts. She shunned the moving thought of the happy days when her heart was free to love. Like the melodies of home which make exiles weep, such thoughts recalled sensations so delightful that her young conscience reproached her for them as so many crimes, and made use of them to make the count's threat seem still more terrible: such was the secret of the horror by which the countess was oppressed.

Sleeping faces possess a sort of gentleness due to perfect repose of body and mind; but although that perfect repose changed but little the harsh expression of the count's features, illusion displays such attractive mirages to the unhappy, that the young woman at last derived some hope from their calmness. The storm, which was now venting itself in torrents of rain, had subsided to a melancholy moaning; in like manner, her fears and her pain gave her a moment's respite. As she gazed upon the man to

whom her life was bound, the countess allowed herself to drift into a reverie so intoxicatingly sweet that she lacked force to break its charm. In an instant, by one of those visions in which there is something of the divine power, she evoked in rapid succession the images of a happiness vanished beyond recall.

First of all, Jeanne saw indistinctly, as if in the distant light of dawn, the modest château in which she had passed her happy, careless childhood; there were the greensward, the rippling brook, the little bedroom, the theatre of her first games. She saw herself plucking flowers, planting them, and unable to understand why they all withered and refused to grow, notwithstanding her constancy in watering them. Soon the great city appeared, still indistinctly, and the great house, blackened by time, to which she was taken by her mother at the age of seven. Her mocking memory showed her the wrinkled faces of the teachers who tormented her. Amid a torrent of Spanish and Italian words, while mentally repeating ballads sung to the accompaniment of a dainty rebeck, she recalled her father's person. She used to go to meet the president on his return from the Palais, she would watch him alight from his mule at the horse-block, would take his hand to climb the staircase with him, and with her childish prattle would banish the judicial anxieties which he did not always lay aside with the black or red robe, whose black and white fur border fell a prey to her mischievous scissors. She cast but a single glance at

her aunt's confessor,—her aunt was the Superior of the nuns of Sainte-Clair,—a stern, fanatical man, to whom was entrusted the duty of initiating her into the mysteries of religion. Hardened by the severe measures which heresy necessitated, that old priest rattled the chains of hell at every opportunity, talked of nothing but the vengeance of Heaven, and kept her in a constant state of dread by persuading her that she was always in the presence of God. She became so timid that she dared not raise her eyes, and had no respect for anyone except her mother, whom she had hitherto made the confidante of her childish escapades. From this time, a religious terror took possession of her when she saw that dearly beloved mother fix her eyes upon her with an appearance of anger.

Suddenly she saw herself in the second period of her childhood, during which she was still entirely ignorant of life. She greeted with an almost ironical regret those days when her happiness consisted in working with her mother in a small embroidery-room, praying in a huge church, singing a ballad to the accompaniment of a rebeck, reading in secret a book of chivalry, tearing a flower to pieces from curiosity to see what presents her father would give her on Saint-John's Day, and trying to decipher the meaning of remarks which people did not finish in her presence.

She speedily rubbed out with a single thought, as one rubs out a word written in pencil in an album, the childish delights which, during that moment of

respite from pain, her imagination had selected from among all the pictures which the first sixteen years of her life had to offer. The charm of that limpid ocean was soon eclipsed by the splendor of a more recent memory, tempestuous though it was. The joyous placidity of her childhood brought her less pleasure than a single one of the troubles thickly strewn along the last two years of her life, years rich in treasures buried forever in her heart. Suddenly the countess reached that memorable morning, when, at the end of the great parlor with the wainscot of carved oak, which was used as a dining-room, she saw her handsome cousin for the first time. Alarmed by the seditious outbreaks in Paris, his mother's family had sent the young courtier to Rouen, in the hope that he would accustom himself to the duties of the magistracy under the tutelage of his great-uncle, whose office might be bestowed upon him some day. The countess smiled involuntarily as she thought how hastily she had retired at sight of that unexpected relation whom she did not know. Despite the promptitude with which she opened and closed the door, that one glance left upon her mind such a clear impression of the scene that she seemed to see it all once more as she saw it when she turned to leave the room. She had then admired only furtively the good taste and splendor which characterized the Paris-made garments; but to-day, more daring in her reminiscences, her eye ranged freely from the gold-embroidered, satin-lined doublet of violet velvet to the spurs

attached to the boots, and from the dainty, diamond-shaped slashing of the doublet and breeches to the rich collar, turned back so as to show the smooth neck, white as the lace itself. She ran her hand over a face distinguished by a pair of slight moustaches twisted to a point, and a *royale* like one of the ermine tails attached to her father's hood. Amid the silence and the darkness, with her eyes fixed on the silk curtains which she no longer saw, oblivious of both the storm and her husband, the countess dared to recall how, after many days which seemed as long as years, they were so fully occupied, the garden surrounded by ancient black walls, and her father's gloomy mansion, seemed to her all gold and light. She loved, she was loved! How, fearful of her mother's stern glances, she had stolen one morning into her father's study to impart her youthful confidences to him, after she had seated herself on his knee and indulged in a succession of playful cajoleries which brought a smile to the eloquent magistrate's lips, a smile which she awaited before saying to him:

"Will you promise not to scold me if I tell you something?"

She fancied that she could hear her father say to her, after a questioning in which she had mentioned her love for the first time:

"Well, my child, we will see. If he studies hard, if he chooses to succeed me, and if he continues to please you, why, I will join your conspiracy."

She had listened to nothing more, but had kissed

her father and upset all his papers as she hurried away to the great linden-tree, where she met the comely Georges de Chaverny every morning, before her mother was out of bed! The courtier promised to devour laws and customs, he laid aside the rich costume of the nobility of the sword for the severe garb of the magistrate.

"I like you better dressed in black," she said.

It was not true, but the fib diminished the regret with which her beloved threw away the sword. The memory of the stratagems employed to deceive her mother, who seemed very stern, renewed for her the fruitful joys of an innocent, legitimate, reciprocated passion. Their rendezvous was under the lindens, where they could talk more freely without witnesses; furtive embraces and stolen kisses,—in a word, all the earnest-money of the passion which does not overstep the bounds of modesty. Living anew as in a dream those blissful days when she blamed herself for having been too happy, she ventured to kiss in empty space that face with the flashing eyes, those red lips which spoke so eloquently of love. She had loved Chaverny, a poor man in appearance; but what treasures she had discovered in that soul, as gentle as it was strong!

Suddenly the president dies, Chaverny does not succeed him, civil war breaks out and rages fiercely. By their cousin's efforts, she and her mother find a secret place of refuge in a small town of Lower Normandie. Soon the deaths of several of her kindred

in rapid succession make her one of the richest heiresses in France. Happiness vanishes with mediocrity of fortune. The savage and terrifying countenance of the Comte d'Hérouville, who demands her hand in marriage, appears to her like a cloud pregnant with thunder spreading its gloomy pall over the treasures of the earth, a moment since made golden by the sun. The poor countess struggles to banish the memory of the scenes of weeping and despair caused by her long-continued resistance. She has a confused vision of the burning of the little town, then of Chaverny the Huguenot thrown into prison, threatened with death and anticipating horrible torture. Then comes that ghastly evening when her mother, pale and dying, throws herself at her feet: Jeanne is able to save her cousin, and she yields. It is night; the count, returning covered with blood from the battle-field, is ready for the ceremony; he produces a priest, torches, a church! Jeanne belongs henceforth to unhappiness. She is hardly allowed to say adieu to her handsome cousin after his deliverance.

"Chaverny, if you love me, never see me more!"

She hears the sound of her noble-hearted lover's receding footsteps; she has never seen him since, but she cherishes in the depths of her heart his last glance, which she sees so often in her dreams, and which interprets her dreams for her. Like a cat confined in a lion's cage, the young woman is in hourly fear of the monster's claws, which threaten her constantly. The countess deems herself guilty

of a crime when, on certain days made memorable by some unexpected pleasure, she dons the dress which the maiden wore when she last saw her lover. To-day, if she would be happy, she must forget the past and cease to think of the future.

"I do not consider myself guilty," she said to herself; "but if I appear guilty in the count's eyes, is it not the same as if I were? Indeed, perhaps I am! Did not the Blessed Virgin conceive without—?"

She paused.

During that moment, when her thoughts were like clouds, when her mind was travelling through the world of fantasy, her innocence led her to attribute to the last glance, whereby her lover flashed all his life into her being, the power to accomplish what the angelic visitation accomplished with the mother of the Saviour. This supposition, worthy of the period of innocence to which her memory had taken her back, vanished before the memory of a conjugal scene more odious than death. The poor countess could no longer harbor any doubt as to the legitimacy of the child that was stirring in her womb. The wedding-night rose up before her with all the horror of its agony, bringing in its train many other nights and even more melancholy days!

"Ah! poor Chaverny!" she cried, weeping bitterly, "you were so submissive, so gracious, always conferring blessings upon me!"

She turned her eyes upon her husband, as if to convince herself that that face gave promise of a clemency so dearly bought. The count was awake.

His yellow eyes, bright as a tiger's, gleamed beneath his bushy eyebrows, and never had his glance been more piercing than at that moment. The countess, terrified to have met that glance, crept under the counterpane and lay quite still.

"Why are you weeping?" demanded the count, roughly pulling away the clothes beneath which his wife had taken refuge.

That voice, always terrifying to her, had at that moment an artificial softness which seemed to her of good augury.

"I am in terrible pain," she replied.

"Well, my love, is it a crime to be in pain? Why do you tremble when I look at you? Alas! what must I do to win your love?"

All the wrinkles of his forehead gathered in a mass between his eyebrows.

"I always frighten you, I can see that plainly enough," he added, with a sigh.

Impelled by the instinct of weak natures, the countess interrupted the count with a groan, and exclaimed:

"I am afraid of a miscarriage! I clambered over the cliffs all the evening, and I must have overfatigued myself."

When he heard these words, Sire d'Hérouville cast such a suspicious glance at his wife that she shuddered and the blood rushed to her face. He mistook the terror he inspired in that innocent creature for a manifestation of remorse.

"Perhaps it is the beginning of a genuine confinement?" he suggested.

"And if it were?" she said, inquiringly.

"Why, in any event, we must have a skilful man here, and I will go to fetch him."

The sombre expression which accompanied these words froze the countess's blood; she fell back on the bed with a sigh, extorted rather by a presentiment of her destiny than by the agony of the impending crisis. That sigh satisfied the count of the reasonableness of the suspicions springing up in his mind. Affecting a calmness which was belied by the tone of his voice, his movements, and the expression of his eyes, he rose hurriedly, wrapped himself in a gown which he found on a chair, and began operations by locking a door near the fireplace, which led from the state bedroom to the suite of reception-rooms opening on the staircase of honor. Observing that her husband retained the key, the countess had a presentiment of disaster; she heard him open the door opposite the one he had locked, and go into another room where the Comtes d'Hérouville were accustomed to sleep when they did not honor their wives with their noble company. The countess knew only by hearsay for what purpose that room was used, as jealousy kept her husband by her side. If, perchance, some military expedition compelled him to absent himself from the nuptial bed, he left at the château Argus-eyed servitors, whose incessant watchfulness betrayed his insulting distrust.

*

Although the countess listened with the closest attention for the slightest sound, she heard nothing more. The count had passed into a long gallery which adjoined his apartment, and occupied the west wing of the château. The Cardinal d'Hérouville, his great-uncle, an enthusiastic collector of printed books, had assembled there a library as interesting by reason of the beauty of the volumes as by their number, and prudence had led him to arrange in the walls one of those inventions which are suggested by solitude or by monastic timidity. A silver chain was so arranged as to set in motion, by means of invisible wires, a bell placed by a trusty servant's pillow. The count pulled the chain, and soon he heard the boots and spurs of the squire who was on guard ringing on the resonant stones of a spiral staircase in the lofty tower which flanked the western wing of the château, toward the ocean. When he heard his retainer mounting the stairs, the count proceeded to put in order the iron springs and bolts which secured the secret door leading from the gallery to the turret, and admitted to that sanctuary of learning a man-at-arms whose figure announced him a servant worthy of the master. The squire was hardly awake, and seemed to have obeyed the summons by instinct; the horn lantern which he held in his hand lighted the long gallery so faintly that

his master and himself were vaguely outlined in the darkness like two phantoms.

"Saddle my battle-horse instantly, and prepare to attend me."

This command was uttered in a deep voice which fully aroused the squire's intelligence; he raised his eyes to his master's face, and encountered a glance so piercing, that he received an electric shock, as it were.

"Bertrand," the count added, placing his right hand on the squire's arm, "remove your cuirass and put on the costume of a captain of *miquelets*."

"*Vrai-Dieu!* monseigneur, disguise myself as a Leaguer! Pardon me! I will obey, but I would much prefer to be hanged."

The count, thus flattered in his fanaticism, smiled; but, to counteract that smile, which contrasted strikingly with the previous expression of his face, he answered, shortly:

"Select a horse strong enough to enable you to follow me. We shall ride like bullets from the arquebus. Be ready when I am ready. I will ring again."

Bertrand bowed silently, and left the room; but when he had descended a few stairs, he said to himself, noticing the howling of the tempest:

"*Jarnidieu!* all the demons are abroad; I should have been much surprised if this one had kept quiet. We took Saint-Lô by surprise in such a storm."

The count found in his chamber the costume which he often used in his ruses. Having donned

IN THE CHÂTEAU D'HÉROUVILLE

This shabby costume gave him such an alarming appearance, and his movements as he approached the bed were so strange, that the countess thought her last hour had come.

"Oh! do not kill us!" she cried.

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his shabby riding-coat, which looked as if it might belong to one of the poor troopers whose wages were so rarely paid by Henri IV., he returned to the room where his wife lay groaning.

"Try to endure the pain patiently," he said. "I will founder my horse, if need be, in order to return more quickly and alleviate your suffering."

These words did not seem ominous of evil to come, and his wife, somewhat emboldened, was preparing to ask a question, when he suddenly asked her:

"Can you tell me where your masks are?"

"My masks?" she replied. "*Bon Dieu!* what do you want of them?"

"Where are your masks?" he repeated, with his usual violence.

"In the wardrobe," she said.

She could not restrain a shudder when she saw her husband select a *touret de nez*,* the use of which was as general among the fine ladies of that time as the use of gloves by the women of the present day. The count was entirely unrecognizable when he had placed upon his head a dilapidated gray felt hat, adorned with a broken cock's-feather. He buckled about his waist a broad leather belt, in which he thrust a dagger which he did not commonly wear. This shabby costume gave him such an alarming appearance, and his movements as he approached the bed were so strange, that the countess thought her last hour had come.

*A small black mask.

"Oh! do not kill us!" she cried; "leave me my child, and I will love you dearly."

"You must feel exceedingly guilty to offer me, as a ransom for your sins, the love which you owe me!"

The count's voice had a disheartening sound behind the velvet mask; his bitter words were accompanied by a glance as heavy as lead, a glance which crushed the countess when it fell upon her.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she cried, piteously, "can it be that innocence brings misfortune?"

"There is no question of your death," her lord replied, rousing himself from the reverie into which he had fallen, "but you are to do exactly, and for love of me, what I demand of you at this moment."

He threw on the bed one of the two masks he held in his hand, and smiled pityingly as he noticed the involuntary gesture of terror caused by the fall of the light black velvet.

"The child you give me will be a lively one, at least!" he cried. "Have this mask on your face when I return," he added. "I do not choose that any clown shall boast that he has seen the Comtesse d'Hérouville."

"Why have a man for this service?" she asked in a low tone.

"Oho! am I not the master here, my love?" retorted the count.

"What matters one mystery more!" said the countess, in despair.

As her master had disappeared, this exclamation

was without danger; the oppressor often carries his measures as far as the victim's fear extends. In one of the brief lulls which separated the fierce squalls, the countess heard the hoof-beats of two horses which seemed to fly among the perilous sand-dunes and cliffs upon which the château was built. The sound was soon drowned by the roar of the waves. She was a prisoner in that gloomy apartment, alone, amid darkness now silent, now menacingly noisy, and without means to turn aside a catastrophe which she saw striding rapidly toward her. The countess tried to invent some ruse to save the child conceived in sorrow, and already become her sole consolation, the moving principle of her thoughts, the future of her affections, her only, though frail, hope. Sustained by maternal courage, she took the little horn which her husband used to summon his people, opened a window, and blew a faint, shrill blast, which was lost on the vast expanse of water, like a bubble blown into the air by a child. She realized the uselessness of that lament, unheard by man, and began to pace back and forth through her apartments, hoping to find some door unlocked. When she reached the library, she tried to no purpose to find some secret passage; she passed through the long book-lined gallery to the window nearest the courtyard of honor of the château, and once more woke the echoes with the horn, contending unsuccessfully with the voice of the storm. In her discouragement, she thought of confiding in one of her women, all of whom were her husband's creatures;

but, as she passed through the oratory, she saw that the count had fastened the door leading to their apartments. This was a horrible discovery. All these precautions taken to isolate her indicated a wish to proceed without witnesses to the execution of some terrible purpose.

As the countess's hope faded away, her pains became sharper, more agonizing. The foreboding of a possible murder, added to the fatigue resulting from her efforts, deprived her of her remaining strength. She was like a shipwrecked man who succumbs to the attack of a wave of less power than those with which he has battled successfully. The painful delirium of childbirth made it impossible for her to count the hours. At the moment when she thought that she was about to be delivered, alone and unassisted, and when her terror was magnified by dread of the accidents to which her inexperience exposed her, the count abruptly appeared; she had heard no sound which announced his coming. He seemed a demon, claiming, at the expiration of a compact, the soul that had been sold to him; he growled under his breath when he saw that his wife's face was uncovered; but, having deftly covered it with the mask, he took her in his arms and placed her on the bed in her chamber.

The alarm caused by his sudden appearance and his acts checked the countess's pains for the moment; she was able to cast a furtive glance upon the actors in this scene, but failed to recognize Bertrand, who was masked as carefully as his master. Having

hastily lighted several candles, whose light blended with the first sunbeams which were reddening the window-panes, the servant leaned against the angle of a window recess. There, with his face turned toward the wall, he seemed to be estimating its thickness, and stood so absolutely motionless that one might have taken him for the statue of a knight. In the centre of the room, the countess saw a short, stout man, gasping for breath, whose eyes were bandaged, and whose features were so distorted by fright that she was unable to imagine their usual expression.

"God's death, master knave," said the count, restoring the stranger's sight by an abrupt movement which caused the bandage to fall upon his neck, "presume not to rest your eyes upon any other object than the wretch upon whom you are to exercise your science; otherwise I will cast you into the stream which flows beneath these windows, after fastening around your neck a diamond necklace weighing more than a hundred pounds!"

And he touched the cravat which he had used as a bandage and which lay across his stupefied auditor's breast.

"Ascertain at first if it be a miscarriage simply; in that case, your life will answer to me for hers; but, if the child is living, bring it to me."

After this apostrophe, the count seized the poor operator by the waist, lifted him as if he were a feather, and deposited him beside the countess. He then stationed himself in the depths of the window-recess, and began to drum on the glass, glancing at

his servant, the bed, and the ocean in turn, as if he intended to promise the child about to be born the sea for its cradle.

The man whom the count and Bertrand had, with incredible violence, roused from the sweetest slumber which ever closed mortal eyes, and bound *en croupe* upon a horse which he might well have deemed to be pursued by the legions of hell, was a personage whose physiognomy was a type of the characteristic physiognomy of that epoch, and whose influence was destined to make itself felt in the D'Hérouville family.

Never, in any period of the world's history, were the nobles less informed in the natural sciences, and never was the science of astrology held in greater honor, for never was the longing to know the future more intense. This universal ignorance and curiosity had brought about the greatest confusion in human knowledge; each individual's knowledge was confined to himself, for special nomenclatures were still lacking; printing required a great outlay, and scientific discoveries were transmitted very slowly; the Church persecuted the sciences, wholly of investigation, based upon analyses of natural phenomena. Persecution engendered mystery. In the mind of the common people, therefore, and of the nobles as well, physicist and alchemist, mathematician and astronomer, astrologer and necromancer, were all confusedly blended in the person of the physician. In those days, the physician of superior skill was suspected of dealing in magic; while treating

his patients, he was supposed to cast horoscopes. The princes extended their protection to the geniuses to whom the future was revealed; they provided them with lodgings in their own palaces, and pensioned them. The famous Cornelius Agrippa, who came to France to be the physician of Henri II., refused to foretell the future as Nostradamus did, and was dismissed by Catherine de Medici, who put Cosmo Ruggieri in his place. Thus the men who were in advance of their age and who devoted themselves to the sciences were by no means appreciated; they all inspired the terror with which most people regarded the occult sciences and their results.

While he was not, strictly speaking, one of these famous mathematicians, the man kidnapped by the count enjoyed in Normandie the equivocal reputation of a physician sometimes employed in mysterious tasks. He was a sorcerer of the species to which the peasants in several districts of France still give the name of *rebouteur*.* The name was applied to certain unpolished geniuses who, without apparent study, but as the result of hereditary knowledge, and, not infrequently, of a long practice from father to son, the observations accruing therefrom being preserved in the family, set broken arms and legs, cured men and animals of certain diseases, and possessed secrets, alleged to be supernatural, for the treatment of serious cases. Not only was Master Antoine Beauvouloir—such was the bone-setter's name—the son and grandson of two famous practitioners from

* Bone-setter.

whom he inherited divers valuable traditions, but he was well informed in medical science and was interested in the natural sciences. The country people saw that his office was full of books and of strange things which gave a tinge of sorcery to his successes. While he was not looked upon precisely as a sorcerer, Antoine Beauvouloir imposed a respect very nearly akin to terror upon the common people within a radius of thirty leagues; and—a fact fraught with great danger to himself—he had within his knowledge secrets of the most vital importance to the noble families of the province. Like his father and grandfather, he was famous for his skill in cases of childbirth, abortion, and miscarriage. Now, in those disorderly times, passions were so fierce and falls from grace so frequent that the nobility were often compelled to admit Master Antoine Beauvouloir to a knowledge of shameful, even terrible secrets. As discretion was absolutely essential to his safety, his discretion was equal to every trial; so that his clients paid him handsomely and his inherited wealth was largely augmented. Always on the move, sometimes taken by surprise as he had been by the count, sometimes obliged to pass several days at the house of some *grande dame*, he had never married; indeed, his reputation had prevented several young women from marrying him. The poor bone-setter was unable to find consolation in the hazards of his profession, which gave him such power over the weaknesses of womankind; he felt that he was made for the joys of domestic life, but could not procure them.

The goodman concealed an excellent heart beneath the deceptive appearances of a jovial disposition, in harmony with his chubby cheeks, his rotundity, the vivacious movements of his little fat body, and his outspokenness. He was anxious to marry in order to have a daughter who should endow some impoverished nobleman with his wealth; for he did not love his trade of bone-setter, and aspired to raise his family from the inferior station to which the prejudices of the time consigned it. His disposition had accommodated itself to the merrymaking and feasting which succeeded his most serious operations. The habit of being always the most important personage in the company had added to his constitutional gayety a touch of solemn vanity. His impertinences were almost always endured at the critical moment, when it was his delight to operate with a certain magisterial moderation. Moreover, he was as inquisitive as a nightingale, as gluttonous as a greyhound, and talkative after the manner of diplomats, who talk without ever betraying their secrets. Making due allowance for these shortcomings, which were developed by the innumerable adventures into which his profession led him, Antoine Beauvouloir was considered to be one of the best men in Normandie. Although he belonged to the small number of men whose minds were in advance of their generation, the natural common sense of a Norman peasant had led him to conceal the ideas he had conceived and the truths he had discovered.

When he found that the count had brought him

into the presence of a woman in labor, the bone-setter recovered all his self-possession. He began to feel the masked lady's pulse without thinking of her at all; but, under cover of this professional air, he was able to reflect, and did reflect, upon his own position. In no one of the shameful and criminal intrigues in which he had been compelled by force to act as a blind instrument had such minute precautions been taken as in this. Although his death had often been discussed, as a method of assuring the success of enterprises in which he was involuntarily involved, his life had never been in such great danger as at that moment. First of all, he determined to discover the identity of his employers, and so to form some estimate of the extent of his peril, in order to take measures to save his precious life.

"What is the matter?" he asked, in an undertone, while preparing the countess to receive the aid of his experience.

"Don't give him the child."

"Speak aloud!" said the count in a voice of thunder, which prevented Master Beauvouloir from hearing the victim's last word. "If you don't," added the nobleman, carefully disguising his voice, "you may say your *In Manus*."

"Groan aloud," said the bone-setter to the patient. "Shriek! *jarnidieu!* this man has jewels which would be no more becoming to you than to me! Courage, my little lady!"

"Gently with your hand!" cried the count again.

"Monsieur is jealous," rejoined the operator, in a shrill voice, which, luckily, was drowned by the countess's shrieks.

For Master Beauvouloir's benefit, nature was kind. It was an abortion rather than childbirth, the child was such a puny creature, and caused his mother so little pain.

"By the Blessed Virgin," cried the puzzled bone-setter, "this is no miscarriage!"

The count stamped with rage until the floor trembled, and the countess pinched Master Beauvouloir.

"Ah! I see," he said to himself.—"It should be a miscarriage, eh?" he inquired of the countess, under his breath; she replied with an affirmative gesture, as if there were no other language to express her thoughts.—"All this is not very clear as yet," thought the bone-setter.

Like all skilful practitioners, he readily recognized the countess as a woman who was experiencing her first misfortune, as he expressed it. But, although the modest awkwardness of some of her movements demonstrated her inexperience, the malicious fellow exclaimed:

"Madame bears children as if she had never done anything else!"

Thereupon the count said, with a tranquillity even more terrifying than his wrath:

"Give me the child!"

"In God's name, do not give it to him!" cried the mother; the almost savage shriek awoke in the little man's heart a courageous kindliness, which attracted

him more strongly than he himself realized to this noble child denied by its father.

"The child has not come yet. You go too fast," he replied, concealing the little fellow.

Astonished to hear no cries, he glanced at the child, thinking that he was already dead; the count thereupon detected the trick, and pounced upon him with a single bound.

"*Tête-Dieu pleine de reliques!* will you give him to me?" he shouted, snatching the victim, who uttered a feeble wail.

"Take care! for he is misshapen and almost a shadow," said Master Beauvouloir, clinging to the count's arm. "It's a seven months' child, undoubtedly!"

Then, with unusual strength born of a sort of exaltation, he clutched the father's fingers, and said in his ear, in a broken voice:

"Spare yourself a crime; he will not live."

"Villain!" hastily retorted the count, from whose hands the bone-setter had torn the child, "who says that I desire my son's death? Don't you see that I am caressing him?"

"Wait until he is eighteen years old before you caress him like that," replied Beauvouloir, recovering his self-importance. "But," he added, thinking of his own safety, for he had recognized the Comte d'Hérouville, who in his excitement had forgotten to disguise his voice, "have him baptized speedily, and do not mention my prediction to the mother; if you do, you will kill her."

The secret joy betrayed by the count's gesture when the child's death was prophesied had suggested this remark to the bone-setter, and thus saved the child's life. Beauvouloir made haste to carry it back to the mother, who was then in a swoon, and he pointed to her with an ironical gesture, designed to alarm the count by calling his attention to the condition into which their dispute had thrown her. The countess had overheard all, for it not infrequently happens that the human organs acquire incredible delicacy of perception in the great crises of life; however, the cries of her child as he lay on the bed restored her life as by magic; she fancied that she heard the voices of two angels, when, under cover of the new-born babe's outcries, the bone-setter whispered, putting his mouth to her ear:

"Take good care of him, he will live a hundred years. Beauvouloir understands what he is talking about."

A celestial sigh, a mysterious pressure of the hand, were his reward; meanwhile, before giving over to the mother's embrace the frail creature whose skin still bore the marks of the count's fingers, he endeavored to ascertain whether the paternal caress had damaged any of his feeble organs. The frenzied haste with which the mother concealed her son by her side, and the threatening glance she darted at the count through the holes in the mask, made Beauvouloir shudder.

"She would die if she should lose her son too soon," he said to the count.

During the last part of this scene, the Sire d'Hérouville seemed not to have heard or seen anything. Standing perfectly still, and apparently buried in profound meditation, he had renewed his drumming on the window-pane; but, after this last remark of the *accoucheur*, he turned upon him with a gesture of insane rage and drew his dagger.

"Vile *manant!*" he cried, giving him the sobriquet which the royalists conferred upon the Leaguers by way of insult, "impudent knave! The professional skill to which you owe the honor of being the confederate of noblemen who are in haste to open or close successions, hardly restrains me from depriving Normandie of its sorcerer forever."

To Beauvouloir's great satisfaction, the count savagely thrust the dagger into its sheath.

"Could you not," continued the Sire d'Hérouville, "be content, for once in your life, to enjoy the society of a nobleman and his dame, without suspecting them of the vile designs which you allow the *canaille* to carry out in peace, not reflecting that they are not justified therein, as gentles are, by reasonable motives? Is it possible that I have reasons of State for acting as you assume that I propose to act at this juncture? Kill my son! take him from his mother! What put such foolish nonsense into your head? Am I mad? Why do you try to frighten us about the life of such a sturdy child as that? Know, varlet, that I distrusted your wretched vanity. If you had known the name of the lady you were to deliver, you would have boasted that you had seen

her! *Paque-Dieu!* you might, perhaps, have killed mother or child by overcaution. But do not forget that your miserable life will answer to me both for your discretion and for their good health!"

The bone-setter was stupefied by the sudden change in the count's intentions. This outburst of affection for the child terrified him even more than the impatient cruelty and stolid indifference manifested by the nobleman at first. His accent as he uttered the last sentence disclosed a more cunning scheme to attain the accomplishment of an unchangeable purpose. Master Beauvouloir explained this unforeseen dénouement by the twofold promise he had made to the mother and the father.

"I understand!" he said to himself. "This worthy seigneur does not wish to make himself odious to his wife, and will fall back on the physician's lack of care. I must try, therefore, to warn the lady to keep an eye on her nobly-born brat."

As he was walking toward the bed, the count, who had gone to a wardrobe, stopped him with an imperative gesture. He held out a purse, and Beauvouloir at once, not without an uneasy joy, made it his duty to make sure of the gold which glistened through the red silk netting, and which was disdainfully tossed to him.

"Although you have made me argue like a serf, I do not deem myself relieved from the necessity of paying you like a lord. I do not ask you to be discreet! This man," continued the count, pointing to Bertrand, "has doubtless explained to you, that,

wherever there are oak-trees and rivers, there my diamonds and my necklaces have a way of finding *manants* who chatter about me."

As he concluded this merciful speech, he walked slowly toward the stupefied bone-setter, noisily pushed a chair in his direction, and seemed to invite him to sit down, as he himself did, beside the mother's bed.

"Well, my love, so we have a son at last," he continued. "It is a great joy to us. Are you in much pain?"

"No," murmured the countess.

The mother's surprise and embarrassment, and the tardy manifestations of factitious pleasure on the father's part, convinced Master Beauvouloir that some incident of grave importance had escaped his usual penetration; he persisted in his suspicions and laid his hand upon that of the young woman, not so much to ascertain her condition as to give her some advice.

"The skin is cool," he said. "There is no reason to fear any unpleasant result for madame. The milk-fever will come, doubtless, in due time; don't be alarmed at that, it will amount to nothing."

At that point, the crafty bone-setter paused, and pressed the countess's hand to attract her attention.

"If you wish to be free from anxiety concerning your child, madame, you must not leave him. Let him drink for a long time to come the milk which his little lips are already seeking; nurse him yourself, and beware of the apothecary's drugs. The bosom

is the remedy for all the ills of children. I have given much attention to cases of confinement at seven months, but I have rarely seen a labor so free from pain as yours. It is not surprising, the child is so small! you could put him in a shoe! I am sure that he does not weigh fifteen ounces. Milk! milk! If you keep him always upon your breast, you will save him."

These last words were accompanied by a renewed pressure of the fingers. Despite the flaming darts which the count's eyes shot through the holes in his mask, Beauvouloir delivered his opinions with the imperturbable gravity of a man who wished to earn his money.

"Ho! bone-setter, you forget your old black hat," said Bertrand as the *accoucheur* went from the room with his.

The motives of the count's new-born clemency toward his son were derived from a notary's *et cætera*. At the very moment that Beauvouloir stayed his hand, avarice and the custom of Normandie had risen before him. With a gesture, those two powers paralyzed his fingers, and imposed silence on his vindictive passions. One said to him: "Your wife's property cannot fall to the house of D'Hérouville except through the medium of a male child!" The other reminded him that if the countess should die, her property would be claimed by the collateral branch of the Saint-Savin. Both advised him to leave to nature the duty of removing the misbegotten child, and to await the birth of a second son

who should be healthy and robust, so that he might snap his fingers at the life of his wife and his first-born. It was no longer a question of a child, but of vast domains, and his affection suddenly became as powerful as his ambition. In his desire to comply with the custom of Normandie, he hoped that this dead-born child would have all the appearance of a robust constitution. The mother, who was well acquainted with the count's character, was even more surprised than the bone-setter, and she retained an instinctive dread, which she sometimes manifested boldly, for maternal courage had increased her strength twofold in an instant.

For several days the count assiduously remained in attendance upon his wife, and lavished attentions upon her to which his selfish interest in her condition imparted something like affection. The countess speedily divined that all these attentions were for her alone. The father's hatred of his son betrayed itself in his most trivial acts; he always avoided looking at him or touching him; he would rise abruptly and go out to give orders when the child began to cry; in fact, he seemed to forgive him for living, only because he hoped to see him die. Even this dissimulation cost the count too much. On the day when he noticed that the mother's intelligent eye detected, although not understanding, the danger which threatened her son, he announced his purpose to go away on the day following the mass in celebration of the mother's recovery, on the pretext that he must lead all his forces to the king's assistance.

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Such were the circumstances attending and preceding the birth of Etienne d'Hérouville. Even though the count had not had the weighty reason for constantly desiring the death of this unacknowledged son that he had already tried to compass his death, even though he had imposed silence upon that deplorable impulse which leads a man to persecute the being whom he has already injured, even though he had not been conscious of the obligation, most painful to him, to feign affection for a hateful abortion, whom he believed to be Chaverny's son, poor Etienne would have been the object of his aversion none the less. The misfortune of a sickly, consumptive constitution, aggravated, perhaps, by his *caress*, was in his eyes an ever-flagrant insult to his self-esteem as a parent. If he execrated handsome men, he detested none the less bitterly those weaklings in whom bodily strength was replaced by strength of intellect. To be agreeable to him a man must be ill-favored, tall, powerful, and ignorant. Etienne, whose physical weakness seemed to doom him to the sedentary pursuit of knowledge, was destined, therefore, to find in his father a pitiless foe. His conflict with that colossus began in his cradle; against so formidable an antagonist he had no other ally than his mother's heart, whose love,

by virtue of a pathetic law of nature, waxed greater with every danger that threatened him.

Plunged suddenly into absolute solitude by the count's abrupt departure, Jeanne de Saint-Savin owed to her child the only semblance of happiness which lightened the gloom of her life. This child, whose birth was made a subject of reproach because of Chaverny, she loved as women love the fruit of an illicit passion; she felt obliged to nurse him, but was conscious of no fatigue. She refused to accept any assistance from her women; she dressed and undressed the child herself, feeling renewed pleasure in every little attention he demanded. This constant occupation, this unremitting attention to the child's wants, the necessity of awaking at the precise moment in order to nurse him, were sources of a felicity that knew no bounds. Happiness shone upon her face when she was attending to the little fellow's needs. As Etienne had come prematurely, her stock of clothing was insufficient; she insisted upon making such articles as were lacking, and she made them, how exquisitely you know, O suspected mothers, who have plied the needle for your cherished offspring, in darkness and in silence! With every stitch, a memory, a wish, a thousand things were worked into the material like pretty patterns. All these follies were repeated to the Comte d'Hérouville, and increased the fury of the storm that had already gathered. The days contained too few hours for the manifold occupations and minute precautions of the nurse; they flew by, laden with secret joys.

The bone-setter's prescriptions were always written in the countess's presence; in her son's behalf she distrusted both the service of her women and the hands of her male servants; she would have liked to be able to go without sleep, so that she might be sure that no one approached Etienne while he slept; his cradle was always by her side; in truth, she kept suspicion on guard in that cradle. During the count's absence, she ventured to send for the *accoucheur*, whose name she had remembered. In her eyes, Beauvouloir was a man to whom she owed an immense debt of gratitude; but she was especially desirous to question him concerning innumerable matters relating to her son. Suppose they should try to poison Etienne, how should she defeat their attempts? How was she to deal with his feeble health? Must she nurse him very long? If she should die, would Beauvouloir undertake to watch over the poor child's health?

To these questions Beauvouloir, deeply moved, replied that he was as fearful of poison for Etienne as she; but that she had nothing to fear in that direction so long as she fed him with her own milk; after Etienne was weaned, he advised her always to taste his food.

"If," added the bone-setter, "Madame la Comtesse observes anything strange on the tongue, a sharp, bitter, strong, or saline taste, in a word, anything unusual, discard the food. Let the child's clothes be washed in your presence, and keep the key of the chest in which they are kept.

Finally, whatever happens, write to me, and I will come."

The bone-setter's words were written on Jeanne's heart, and she begged him to look upon her as being entirely at his service; Beauvouloir thereupon told her that she held all his hope of happiness in her hands.

He proceeded to tell the countess in a few words how the Seigneur d'Hérouville, in default of nobly-born and lovely maidens at court who would accept his homage, had loved in his youth a courtesan called the *Fair Roman*, who had formerly belonged to the Cardinal de Lorraine. The *Fair Roman*, being speedily deserted, had come to Rouen to solicit the count at close quarters in behalf of a daughter, of whom he absolutely refused to speak, alleging her beauty as an excuse for not acknowledging her. At the death of that woman, in utter destitution, the poor child, whose name was Gertrude, and who was even more beautiful than her mother, had been taken by the nuns at the convent of Sainte-Claire, whose Superior was Mademoiselle de Saint-Savin, the countess's aunt. Having been called in to treat Gertrude, he had fallen madly in love with her.— "If Madame la Comtesse," he added, "would deign to espouse his cause, not only would she repay all that she considered that she owed him, but he would deem himself indebted to her. In this way, his coming to the château, which might seem very suspicious in the count's eyes, would be justified; then the count would, sooner or later, become interested

in so lovely a child, and might, perhaps, extend his patronage to her indirectly some day by making him his physician."

The countess, always so fully in sympathy with true love, promised to forward the poor bone-setter's. She followed up the affair so warmly, that, at the time of her second lying-in, she obtained, as the favor which in those days women were privileged to ask in childbed, a dowry for Gertrude, the lovely foundling, who, at about the same time, instead of becoming a nun, married Beauvouloir. This dowry and the bone-setter's savings enabled him to purchase Forcalier, a pretty little estate near the château d'Hérouville, which was offered for sale by the heirs.

Thus reassured by the worthy *accoucheur*, the countess felt that her life was filled forever with joys unknown to other mothers. Surely all women are lovely when they hold their children at their breasts, watching while their cries grow fainter and their infantile pains are soothed away; but one could hardly find, even in Italian pictures, a more touching scene than that presented by the countess when she felt Etienne drinking her milk, and her blood thus giving life to that poor threatened creature. Her face glowed with love, as she gazed at the dear little fellow, always fearful lest she should detect some resemblance to Chaverny, of whom she had thought so much. These thoughts, mingled on her brow with the outward expression of her joy, the gaze with which she brooded over her son, her

longing to transmit to him the strength which she felt in her heart, her resplendent hopes, the fascinating grace of her movements, all combined to form a picture which conquered the women in attendance upon her; the countess vanquished *espionage*.

Soon these two feeble beings were united by a common thought, and they could understand each other before language was of any assistance to them. When Etienne began to use his eyes with the untrained avidity characteristic of infants, his glance fell upon the dark wainscoting of the State chamber. When his young ears strove to distinguish sounds and understand the differences between them, he heard the monotonous plashing of the sea which broke upon the cliffs with a movement as regular as that of a pendulum. Thus, surroundings, sounds, objects, everything which makes an impression on the senses, prepares the understanding, and forms the character, predisposed him to melancholy. Was not his mother destined to live and die amid the clouds of melancholy? From his birth, he might readily believe that the countess was the only living creature on earth, might look upon the world as a desert, and become accustomed to that tendency to depend upon one's self which impels us to live alone, to seek happiness within ourselves by developing the vast resources of thought. Was not the countess doomed to live her life in solitude and to look for happiness to her son alone, who was persecuted even as her love was persecuted?

Like all children of feeble constitution, Etienne never departed from the passive attitude which was characteristic of his mother—a touching resemblance! His organs were so sensitive that a sudden noise or the presence of a boisterous person threw him into a sort of fever. You would have said that he was one of those tiny insects for whose behoof God seems to temper the violence of the wind and the sun's heat; like them, incapable of contending against the slightest obstacle, he yielded like them, without resistance or complaint, at the slightest indication of an aggressive spirit. This angelic patience inspired in the countess a profound sentiment to which she owed the entire absence of fatigue as a result of the painstaking care necessitated by his precarious health.

She thanked God for placing Etienne, like a multitude of mortals, in the bosom of the sphere of peace and silence, the only sphere in which he could be successfully reared. Often his mother's hands, at once so strong and so gentle in their treatment of him, lifted him to the lofty regions of the ogive windows. From there his eyes, blue like his mother's, seemed to study the magnificence of the ocean. They would both remain for hours at a time gazing at that vast, limitless expanse of water, sombre and resplendent, dumb and resonant by turns. These long meditations were to Etienne a secret apprenticeship to sorrow. Then, his mother's eyes were almost always wet with tears, and, during those painful musings of the soul, Etienne's youthful features resembled a slender net drawn asunder by

a too great weight. Ere long his precocious insight into unhappiness revealed to him the power that his play exerted upon the countess; he tried to divert her by the same caresses to which she resorted to soothe his sufferings. Nor did his mischievous little hands, his little lisping words, his intelligent laughter, ever fail to dissipate his mother's reveries. If he were fatigued, his instinctive delicacy of feeling prevented him from complaining.

"Poor, dear sensitive creature!" the countess cried, as she watched him, sound asleep from weariness, after a frolic which had put to flight one of her most painful reminiscences, "where could you live? Who will ever understand you, whose tender heart will be wounded by a too stern glance? who, like your sad mother, will deem a sweet smile more precious than all the good things of earth? Mother's beloved angel, who will ever love you in this world? Who will divine the treasures concealed beneath thy frail envelope? No one. Like me, you will be alone on earth. God keep you from forming, as I did, an attachment favored by God but frowned upon by man!"

She sighed, she wept. The graceful attitude of her son, who lay asleep on her knee, made her smile sadly: she gazed long at him, drinking her fill of the unspeakable bliss which is a secret between a mother and God. As she had discovered that her voice, blending with the strains of the mandolin, delighted her son, she would sing to him the pretty ballads of that period, and fancy that she could see

upon his little lips, smeared with her milk, the smile with which Georges de Chaverny used to thank her when she laid aside her rebeck. She blamed herself for dwelling thus upon the past, but she continued to dwell upon it none the less. The child, her confederate in these dreams, smiled at the self-same airs that Chaverny loved.

At eighteen months, Etienne was still so feeble that the countess had not yet ventured out-of-doors; but the faint coloring that played over his sallow cheeks, as if the palest petal of an eglantine had been wafted thither by the wind, gave evidence of life and health. Just as she was beginning to believe in the bone-setter's prophecies and was congratulating herself on her success, during the count's absence, in surrounding her son with the strictest precautions, in order to shelter him from all danger, letters written by her husband's secretary announced his speedy return. One morning, the countess, abandoning herself to the insane delight which possesses all mothers when they see their first child walk for the first time, was playing with Etienne at one of those games which are as indescribable as the charm of memory. Suddenly she heard the floor creak under a heavy step. She had hardly time to rise, with an involuntary gesture of astonishment, when she found herself in the count's presence. She uttered an exclamation, but instantly tried to atone for that involuntary offence by walking to meet the count and submissively offering her brow to be kissed.

"Why did you not notify me of your coming?" she said.

"Had I done so," replied the count, interrupting her, "your welcome would have been more cordial, but less frank."

He looked at the child; the state of health in which he found him drew from him at first a gesture of surprise blended with rage; but he repressed his wrath, and began to smile.

"I bring you good news," he said. "I am made governor of Champagne, and I have the king's promise that I shall be a duke and a peer. Moreover, we have inherited the property of a kinsman: that infernal Huguenot, Chaverny, is dead."

The countess turned pale, and sank upon a chair. She divined the secret of the sinister satisfaction depicted on her husband's features, and apparently heightened by the sight of Etienne.

"Monsieur," she said in a trembling voice, "you are aware that I have loved my cousin Chaverny for many years. You will answer to God for the sorrow you cause me."

At these words, the count's eyes gleamed; his lips trembled, and he could not utter a syllable, so convulsed was he by passion; he threw his dagger on the table with such violence that the steel rang like a peal of thunder.

"Hark ye," he cried in his great voice, "and remember my words; I never wish to see or hear the little monster you have in your arms, for he is your child, not mine; has he a single one of my

features? *Tête-Dieu!* keep him out of my sight, or—"

"Merciful Heaven," cried the countess, "protect us!"

"Silence!" roared the colossus. "If you don't wish me to come in collision with him, look to it that I never find him in my path."

"Swear to me, then," rejoined the countess, feeling emboldened to do battle with her tyrant, "swear to me that you will not threaten his life if you do not see him. Can I rely upon your word as a nobleman?"

"What does this mean?" demanded the count.

"Then kill us both to-day!" she cried, throwing herself on her knees and straining her child to her breast.

"Rise, madame! I pledge my faith as a nobleman to take no steps against the life of yonder misbegotten imp, provided that he lives among the rocks on the shore below the château; I give him the fisherman's house for his dwelling and the beach for his domain; but, woe to him, if I ever find him beyond those limits!"

The countess began to weep bitterly.

"Look at him," she said. "He is your son."

"Madame!"

At that word, the terrified mother hurried from the room with her child, whose heart beat like that of a little bird surprised in its nest by a shepherd. Whether it be that innocence has a fascination which the most hardened men cannot resist, or that the

count blamed himself for his violence, and feared lest he should cause a too violent despair in a creature as necessary to his pleasures as to his schemes, his voice had become as soft as it was possible for it to be when his wife returned.

"Jeanne, my love," he said, "do not bear me a grudge, but give me your hand. A man doesn't know how to act with you women. I bring you new honors, increased wealth, *tête-Dieu!* and you receive me like a marauder who comes upon a party of rustics. My new government will necessitate long absences from home, until I can exchange it for the government of Normandie; at least, treat me kindly while I am here, my love."

The countess understood the meaning of these words, and their affected gentleness did not deceive her.

"I know my duty," she replied in a melancholy tone which her husband took as an indication of affection.

The timid creature was too pure, too noble, to try, as some shrewd women would have done, to govern the count by a skilfully devised course of conduct toward him, a species of prostitution which leaves a stain upon noble hearts. She silently left the room, to soothe her despair by taking Etienne to walk.

"*Tête-Dieu!* shall I never win her love?" cried the count, detecting a tear in his wife's eyes just as she turned away.

The sentiment of maternity, being incessantly threatened, became in the countess a passion which

attained the violence that women display in their guilty passions. By a sort of witchcraft, the secret of which lies in every mother's heart, and which was unusually powerful between the countess and her son, she succeeded in making him realize the danger which threatened him every moment, and taught him to dread his father's approach. The terrible scenes of which Etienne had been a witness had made so deep an impression on his memory that it had caused a sort of disease. He was able, finally, to foresee the count's presence with such certainty that if one of those smiles whose imperceptible signs are clear as day to a mother's eyes lighted up his face at the moment when his imperfect organs, already developed by fear, announced his father's step in the distance, his features would contract, and the mother's ear was no more unerring than the son's instinct. As he grew older, his faculty born of terror increased to such a degree, that, like the North American savage, Etienne could distinguish his father's step or hear his voice at an extraordinary distance, and could always announce his coming. The knowledge that the terror which her husband inspired in her was shared so soon by her child made him more dear to her; and their union became so strong that, like two flowers attached to the same twig, they bent before the same wind and were raised again by the same hope. Their lives were identical.

At the time of the count's departure, Jeanne was entering upon a second pregnancy. She was brought

to bed this time at the end of the term which popular prejudice dictates, and brought into the world, not without incredible suffering, a sturdy boy, who, after a few months, was such a perfect reproduction of his father that the count's detestation of the elder became still more intense. In order to save the life of her beloved child, the countess assented to all the plans formed by her husband for the happiness and wealth of his second son. Etienne, destined for a cardinalship, must enter the priesthood in order to leave to Maximilien the property and titles of the house of D'Hérouville. At this price, the poor mother assured the safety of her accursed child.

Never were two brothers more unlike than Etienne and Maximilien. The younger exhibited from his birth a liking for noise, for violent exercise, and for fighting; wherefore the count conceived as great a love for him as the countess had for Etienne. By a sort of tacit compact, not unnatural under the circumstances, each of them took sole charge of his or her favorite child. The duke—about this time Henri IV. rewarded the Seigneur d'Hérouville's eminent services—the duke did not wish, he said, to fatigue his wife, so he engaged as Maximilien's nurse a buxom matron from Bayeux, selected by Beauvouloir. To Jeanne de Saint-Savin's great joy, he was as suspicious of her mind as of her milk, and determined to mould his son to suit himself. He brought up Maximilien in holy horror of books and letters; he trained him in the mechanical branches of the military art, he taught him to ride at an early age, and

to fire an arquebus and handle a dagger. When his son grew to be a tall stripling, he took him out to hunt, so that he might contract that savagery of speech, that roughness of manner, that strength of body, that virility of expression and of voice, which, in his eyes, made an accomplished man. At twelve years, the little nobleman was an unlicked lion's whelp, at least as much dreaded as his father; with license to tyrannize over everybody, and availing himself thereof to the full.

Etienne lived in the house on the shore which his father had given him, and which the duchess so furnished that he was supplied with some of the means of enjoyment to which he was entitled. The duchess passed the greater part of the day there. The mother and son together wandered over the rocks and along the beach; she pointed out to Etienne the limits of his little domain of sand, shells, moss, and stones; the profound terror which assailed her when he stepped outside the territory allotted to him made him understand that death lay in wait for him there. Etienne trembled for his mother before he trembled for himself; ere long the mere name of the Duc d'Hérouville disturbed him so that all his energy vanished, and he was reduced to the state of utter helplessness which causes a girl to fall on her knees before a tiger. If he spied that redoubtable giant in the distance, or if he heard his voice, the same painful sensation he had felt long before when he was cursed, froze the blood in his veins. And so, like the Laplander who dies when he wanders away

from his perpetual snows, he made himself a delightful home of his cabin and his cliffs; if he passed the frontier, he was conscious of an indefinable discomfort.

Realizing that her poor child could find happiness only in a humble and silent sphere, the duchess, at first, had less regret for the destiny imposed upon him; she availed herself of the calling that was forced upon him, to lay out a noble life for him by filling his solitude with the noble search for knowledge, and summoned Pierre de Sebonde to the château to act as tutor to the future Cardinal d'Hérouville. Although her son was destined to the tonsure, Jeanne did not wish that his education should have too strong a flavor of the priesthood, and she secularized it by her own intervention. Beauvouloir was employed to initiate Etienne in the mysteries of the natural sciences. The duchess, who kept an eye upon his studies herself, in order to apportion them to his strength, afforded him needed recreation by teaching him Italian, and revealed to him insensibly the poetic treasures of that tongue. While the duke was leading Maximilien in pursuit of the wild boar, at the risk of grievous wounds, Jeanne wandered with Etienne in Petrarch's Milky Way, or in the gigantic labyrinth of the *Divina Commedia*. Nature, by way of recompense for his infirmities, had endowed Etienne with such a melodious voice that it was difficult to resist the pleasure of listening to him; his mother was his instructress in music. Songs of love and sadness, accompanied by the

strains of a mandolin, were a favorite recreation which the mother held out as a reward for the performance of some task set by Abbé de Sebonde. Etienne listened to his mother with a passionate admiration which she had never seen in any eyes but Chaverny's. The first time that the poor woman was reminded of her girlhood by her child's persistent gaze, she covered him with wild kisses. She blushed when Etienne asked her why it was that she seemed to love him more dearly at that moment, then answered that she loved him more every hour. Soon she found in the painstaking care demanded by the education of his mind and the cultivation of his intellect the same pleasures that she had tasted in nourishing and rearing her child's body. Although mothers do not always grow with their sons, the duchess was one of those who carry into maternity the humble adoration of love; she could caress and judge; she staked her self-esteem upon making Etienne superior to herself in everything, and not upon domineering over him; perhaps she was conscious of being so great in her inexhaustible affection, that she had no fear of decreasing in stature. Hearts without affection are those that love domination, but genuine sentiment cherishes self-abnegation, that sublime virtue of strength. When Etienne failed at first to understand some demonstration, a text, or a theorem, the poor mother, who was present at the lessons, would seem to be trying to infuse knowledge into him, as, in the old days, at the slightest cry, she poured out milk for him in streams. And

how the duchess's eyes shone with joy when Etienne grasped the meaning of things and made it his own! She showed, as Pierre de Sebonde said, that the mother is a twofold being whose sentiments always embrace two lives.

Thus the duchess magnified the natural sentiment which binds a son to his mother by the innumerable manifestations of a reanimated love. On account of Etienne's delicate health, she continued for several years to take care of him as if he were still a child; she dressed him and put him to bed; she alone combed and brushed, curled and perfumed her son's hair. This toilet was one long caress; she kissed that dear head every time that she lightly passed the comb through it. As women like to play the mother's part with their lovers by performing some domestic service for them, so this mother made of her son a simulacrum of a lover; she detected in him a vague resemblance to the beloved cousin beyond the grave. Etienne was like Georges's ghost, vaguely seen in the depths of a magic mirror; she said to herself that he was more nobleman than churchman.

"If some woman with a heart as loving as mine would infuse the life of love into his veins, he might be very happy!" she often thought.

But the weighty interests which demanded that Etienne's head should be shaven would recur to her memory, and she would drop a tear as she kissed the locks that the scissors of the Church were destined to shear. Notwithstanding the unjust compact made with the duke, she never saw Etienne either as

priest or as cardinal through the holes which her maternal eye pierced in the dense darkness of the future. The father's entire forgetfulness enabled her to postpone her son's entrance into the Church.

"It will never be too late!" she would say to herself.

Then, without avowing to herself a thought that was buried in her heart, she trained Etienne in the graceful manners of the courtiers, she wished him to be as gentle and refined as Georges de Chaverny. Being reduced to a very slender pittance by the ambition of the duke, who managed the property of her family and employed all the revenues for his own advancement or for the maintenance of his establishment, she dressed in the simplest fashion, and spent nothing at all for herself, in order to supply her son with velvet cloaks, high boots with lace tops, and slashed doublets of fine stuffs. Her personal deprivations afforded her the delight which always accompanies the sacrifices we conceal from those who are dear to us. As she embroidered a collar, she hugged herself in secret at the thought of the day when it would adorn her son's neck. She alone had charge of Etienne's clothes, his linen, his perfumes, and his toilet; she adorned her own person only for him, for she loved to have him think her beautiful. All this solicitude, accompanied by a sentiment which penetrated her son's flesh and revivified it, had its reward. One day, Beauvouloir, that divine man who by his lessons had made himself dear to the accursed child, and with whose services Etienne

was not unacquainted; that physician whose anxious expression made the duchess tremble whenever he examined her frail idol, declared that Etienne might live many years if his delicate frame were not suddenly agitated by some emotion.

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At this time, Etienne was sixteen years of age. He had reached the height of five feet, and was not likely to grow any taller; but Georges de Chaverny was of medium height. Through his skin, as transparent and satiny as any girl's, the faintest tracery of his blue veins could be seen. His complexion was of the whiteness of porcelain. His light-blue eyes, endowed with an ineffable sweetness, implored the protection of men and women; the alluring suavity of prayer shone in his glance and fascinated one, before the melodious tones of his voice completed the charm. The most genuine modesty was revealed in every feature. His long chestnut hair, glossy and fine, and curly at the ends, was parted over his forehead. His pale, hollow cheeks, his white brow, traversed by a few wrinkles, betrayed a life-long suffering painful to witness. His mouth, which curved gracefully, and was well furnished with white teeth, wore that species of smile which becomes fixed upon the lips of the dying. His hands, as white as a woman's, were of a remarkably beautiful shape. His long meditations had caused him to acquire the habit of bending his head forward, like a withered plant, and the attitude was becoming to him: it was like the last touch which an artist gives to a portrait to bring out the whole of his thought. You would have said that it

was the head of a sick girl on the body of a frail, misshapen man.

The studious poesy whose teeming meditations lead us to traverse, like a botanist, the vast fields of thought, the fruitful comparison of human ideas, the mental exaltation caused by the perfect comprehension of the works of genius, had become the placid and inexhaustible delights of his dreamy and solitary life. The flowers, fascinating creations, whose destiny bore so great a resemblance to his, had all his love. Happy to discover in her own son harmless passions which protected him from the rude touch of social life, which he could no more have resisted than the prettiest *dorado* in the ocean could resist a single sunbeam on the shore, the countess had encouraged Etienne's taste by bringing him Spanish *romanceros*, Italian *motets*, books, sonnets, and poems. Cardinal d'Hérouville's library was Etienne's heritage, and reading was destined to fill his life. Every morning the boy found his solitude peopled with pretty plants rich in coloring and sweet-smelling. Thus his reading, in which his feeble health did not allow him to indulge long at one time, and his exercise among the rocks, were interrupted by fits of ingenious meditation, in which he would remain for whole hours seated before his laughing flowers, his sweet playfellows, or lying in the hollow of a rock before some alga or moss or marine grass, studying its mysteries. He would seek a rhyme in the bosom of a fragrant blossom, as the bee steals its honey there. He often admired, aimlessly and without trying to explain his

interest, the delicate lines drawn upon the petals in dark colors, the delicacy of the rich tunics of gold or azure, green or violet, the innumerable lovely shapes of calyx and leaf, and their smooth or velvety surfaces, which were torn asunder, like his heart, by the slightest touch. Later, a thinker no less than a poet, he was to discover the explanation of these innumerable variations of a single nature, by discerning therein an indication of precious faculties; for from day to day he made rapid progress in the interpretation of the divine Word, which is written upon everything on this earth. This persistent and secret investigation of the occult world imparted to his life the apparent somnolence of meditative geniuses. Etienne would lie for whole days, stretched out on the sand, perfectly happy, a poet without his own knowledge. The sudden passing of a golden insect, the reflection of the sun in the ocean, the shimmering of the vast, limpid mirror of water, a shell, a sea-anemone, everything was a source of pleasurable excitement to that ingenuous soul. To see his mother coming, to hear the rustling of her dress, to wait for her, to kiss her, to speak to her, to listen to her, caused him such keen emotion that often a trifling delay or the slightest apprehension would throw him into a burning fever. There was but one soul in his body, and, in order that that feeble and always sickly body should not be destroyed by the intense emotions of that soul, silence, caresses, a placid natural environment, and the love of a woman were most essential. For the moment, his mother

lavished love and caresses upon him; the cliffs were silent; flowers and books gave charm to his solitude; in fine, his little kingdom of sand and shells, of algæ and verdure, seemed to him a world that was always fresh and new.

Etienne had all the benefits of that physical life, so profoundly innocent; of that mental life, so poetic and of such wide range. A child in form, a man in intellect, he was equally angelic in both aspects. By virtue of his mother's determination, his studies had transported his emotions into the region of ideas. The action of his life, therefore, took place in the moral world, far from the social world which might have killed him or caused him suffering. He lived by the soul and the intellect. After he had grasped human thoughts by reading, he raised himself to the level of the thoughts which set matter in motion, he felt thoughts hovering in the air, he read them written in the sky. In a word, he ascended early in life the ethereal peak where the delicate food suited to his soul was to be found, intoxicating food, which, however, predestined him to unhappiness on the day when these accumulated treasures should be added to the riches with which a sudden passion fills the heart. But if Jeanne de Saint-Savin dreaded such a storm, she speedily consoled herself by a thought inspired by her son's melancholy destiny; for the poor mother could conceive of no other remedy for one calamity than a lesser calamity; thus all her pleasures were full of bitterness.

"He will be a cardinal," she said to herself, "he

will live by love of the arts, of which he will become the patron. He will love art instead of loving a woman, and art will never betray him."

Thus the joys of this doting mother were constantly darkened by gloomy thoughts, born of Etienne's abnormal position in the bosom of his family. The two brothers had passed the adolescent age without knowing each other, without ever seeing each other, without any knowledge of each other's existence. The duchess had long hoped for an opportunity, during one of her husband's absences, to bind the brothers together by some solemn scene in which she would envelop them both in her love. She flattered herself that she could arouse Maximilien's interest in Etienne by pointing out to him how much love and affection he owed to his sickly elder brother in return for the sacrifices which had been forced upon him, and to which he would always adhere, although he had made them under duress. This long-cherished hope had vanished. Now, far from wishing to bring the brothers together, she dreaded a meeting between Etienne and Maximilien more than one between Etienne and his father. Maximilien, who believed in nothing good, would have been afraid that Etienne would some day reassert his unacknowledged rights, and he would have tossed him into the sea with a stone around his neck. Never had a son less respect for his mother than he. As soon as he was able to think, he had noticed how little regard the duke had for his wife. Although the old

governor still retained some show of decency in his manner toward the duchess, Maximilien, over whom his father exercised little restraint, wounded her in innumerable ways. Bertrand was always on guard to prevent Maximilien from catching a glimpse of Etienne, whose very birth indeed was carefully concealed. All the servants of the château cordially detested the Marquis de Saint-Sever, by which name Maximilien was known, and they who knew of the elder brother's existence looked upon him as an avenger whom God held in reserve. Etienne's future was uncertain, therefore; perhaps he would be persecuted by his brother!

The poor duchess had no relations to whom she could entrust the life and interests of her beloved child; would not Etienne blame his mother, if, perchance, under the Roman purple, he should aspire to be a father as she had been a mother? Such thoughts as these, and her melancholy life overflowing with secret sorrows, were like a long illness tempered by a pleasant diet. Her heart demanded the most skilful handling, and those who surrounded her were painfully inexpert in the art of gentleness. What mother's heart would not have been torn incessantly to see her oldest son, a man of heart and brain in whom a noble genius had made itself manifest, deprived of his rights; while the younger, who was a do-no-good, entirely without talent, even in the act of war, was chosen to wear the ducal crown and to perpetuate the family? The house of D'Hérouville denied its most glorious scion. Jeanne

de Saint-Savin was incapable of cursing, she could only bless and weep; but she often raised her eyes to Heaven as if to ask the reason of this strange decree. Her eyes filled with tears when she reflected that at her death her son would be altogether an orphan, and would be without shelter from the brutal treatment of a brother without faith or law.

Such a multitude of repressed emotions, an unforgotten first love, a world of unappreciated sorrows,—for she concealed her bitterest suffering from her beloved child,—her pleasures never unalloyed, her incessant disappointments, had impaired the vital principle and developed in her a languishing disease which, far from being diminished, acquired fresh force every day. In due time, a last blow hastened the duchess's decline: she tried to reason with the duke concerning Maximilien's education, and was repulsed; she could do nothing to counteract the detestable seed that was germinating in that child's mind. She began to fade so perceptibly that it became necessary to promote Beauvouloir to the post of physician to the family of D'Hérouville, and of the household of the governor of Normandie. The former bone-setter took up his residence at the château. In those days, such posts were bestowed upon scholars, who enjoyed therein the necessary leisure for carrying on their investigations, and the remuneration indispensable to their life of study. Beauvouloir had long aspired to the position, for his learning and his wealth had procured him many inveterate enemies. Despite the

protection of a great family to whom he had been useful in a certain affair, he had recently been involved in a criminal prosecution, and nothing less than the intervention of the governor of Normandie, at the duchess's solicitation, availed to stop the proceedings. The duke had no reason to regret his notorious espousal of the ex-bone-setter's cause: Beauvouloir saved the Marquis de Saint-Sever from an illness so serious that no other physician could have effected a cure. But the duchess's wound was of too ancient date to be cured, especially when it was constantly reopened in her home. When the intensity of her suffering seemed to portend the speedy demise of that angel whom so many bitter sorrows prepared for a happier destiny, death's pace was accelerated by gloomy forebodings of the future.

"What will become of my poor child without me?" was a thought which recurred again and again like a wave of bitterness.

At last, when she was obliged to keep her bed, the duchess glided swiftly toward the tomb; for then she was deprived of her son, to whom her bedside was forbidden by the compact to the faithful observance of which he owed his life. The child's grief was equal to the mother's. Inspired by the genius peculiar to repressed feelings, Etienne created the most mysterious of languages to enable him to converse with his mother. He studied the resources of his voice as the most talented singer might have done, and sang in a melancholy accent beneath his mother's window when Beauvouloir signalled to him

that she was alone. Formerly, in the cradle, he had comforted his mother by intelligent smiles; now, having grown to be a poet, he caressed her with the sweetest melodies.

"That singing gives me new life!" said the duchess to Beauvouloir, inhaling the air to which Etienne's voice imparted quickening force.

At last, the moment arrived when a long period of mourning was to begin for the accursed child. On several previous occasions, he had discovered a mysterious affinity between his emotions and the movements of the ocean. The power of divining the thoughts of matter, with which his occult learning had gifted him, made this phenomenon more eloquent to him than to others. During the fatal evening when he was to see his mother for the last time, the ocean was convulsed by movements which seemed to him most extraordinary. The surface of the water was so agitated as to disclose the fermentation of the lower deeps; the sea rose in huge waves which expired on the shore with a mournful noise like the howling of a dog in distress. Etienne surprised himself, asking:

"What does it want of me? it trembles and moans like a living creature! My mother has often told me that the ocean writhed in horrible convulsions the night I was born. What is going to happen to me?"

This thought kept him standing at the window of his hovel, with his eyes fixed sometimes on the window of his mother's chamber, where a light was flickering, sometimes on the ocean, which continued

to groan. Suddenly, Beauvouloir knocked softly, opened the door, and appeared with the reflection of disaster upon his saddened face.

"Monseigneur," he said, "madame is in such a critical condition that she wishes to see you. All precautions are taken so that no harm can happen to you at the château; but we must be very prudent, we shall be obliged to pass through monseigneur's bedroom, the room where you were born."

These words brought tears to Etienne's eyes.

"The ocean has spoken to me!" he cried.

He mechanically submitted to be led toward the door of the tower to which Bertrand had been summoned on the night when the duchess was brought to bed of the accursed child. The squire was waiting there, lantern in hand. Etienne was taken to Cardinal d'Hérouville's great library, where he was obliged to remain with Beauvouloir while Bertrand went before to open the doors and make sure that the accursed child could safely pass. The duke was not awake. As they crept noiselessly along, Beauvouloir and Etienne heard naught in the vast château save the faint moaning of the dying woman. Thus the circumstances that attended Etienne's birth were repeated at his mother's death. The same tempestuous weather, the same agony, the same fear of waking the pitiless giant, who was sleeping soundly this time. To avoid all danger, the squire took Etienne in his arms and carried him through his redoubtable master's bedroom, prepared to put forward some excuse based on the duchess's condition

if he should be detected. Etienne's heart was horribly oppressed by the terror of those two loyal servants; but the emotion prepared him, so to speak, for the spectacle presented to his eyes in that seignorial apartment which he now entered for the first time since the day on which his father's curse had banished him therefrom. On the great bed which happiness never visited, his eyes sought his beloved and did not find her without some difficulty, she had grown so thin. White as the lace about her neck, having but a few last breaths to draw, she collected all her strength to take Etienne's hand, and would fain have given him all her soul in one last glance, as Chaverny had bequeathed all his life to her in an adieu. Beauvouloir and Bertrand, the child and the mother, and the sleeping duke were once more assembled in the same room. The same spot, the same stage-setting, the same actors; but the sorrow of death instead of the joys of maternity, the darkness of the grave instead of the light of life. At this juncture, the storm which had been foreshadowed since sundown by the melancholy moaning of the sea, suddenly burst upon the château.

"Dear flower of my life," said Jeanne de Saint-Savin, kissing her son's brow, "you were taken from my womb in the midst of a storm, and in the midst of a storm I am taken from you. Between these two storms my whole life has been stormy, save for the hours I have passed with you. This is my last joy; it is mingled with my last sorrow. Adieu, my only love! adieu, lovely image of two

souls soon to be united! adieu, my only joy, pure joy! adieu, my only beloved!"

"Let me go with you," said Etienne, who had lain down on his mother's bed.

"That would be a happier destiny!" she replied, and the tears rolled down her livid cheeks, for, as in the old days, her glance seemed to read the future.—"Did no one see him?" she asked the two retainers.

At that moment, the duke moved in his bed; they all started in alarm.

"There is some alloy even in my last pleasure!" said the duchess. "Take him away! take him away!"

"Mother, dear, I would see you a moment more and die!" said the poor child, fainting on the bed.

At a sign from the duchess, Bertrand took him in his arms, and, after allowing the mother to see his face once more and to kiss him with a parting glance, he prepared to carry him away, awaiting further orders from the dying woman.

"Love him dearly," she said to the squire and the physician, "for I know of no others to protect him save you and God."

Warned by an instinct which never deceives mothers, she had observed the profound compassion aroused in the old squire's heart by the eldest son of the powerful family for which he entertained a feeling of veneration comparable to that of the Jews for the holy city. As for Beauvouloir, the compact between the duchess and him had been

signed long before. These two servitors, deeply moved by the thought that their mistress was compelled to bequeath that noble child to them, promised with a solemn gesture to be their young master's providence; and the mother had faith in that gesture.

The duchess died in the morning, a few hours later; she was mourned by the old servants, who, in lieu of discourse, said upon her tomb that she was "a lovely woman fallen from paradise."

Etienne was plunged in the most intense and most lasting of all sorrows, moreover, a voiceless sorrow. He no longer wandered among the rocks, he no longer felt energy enough to read or sing. He remained whole days crouching in the hollow of a rock, indifferent to the inclemency of the weather, motionless, as if bound fast to the granite, like one of the mosses that flourished there, weeping very rarely, but absorbed in a single thought, a thought as vast, as infinite, as the ocean; and, like the ocean, that thought assumed a thousand forms, became by turns awe-inspiring, tempestuous, calm. It was more than a sorrow, it was a new life, an irrevocable destiny imposed upon that beautiful creature who was destined never to smile again. There are troubles which, like blood thrown into running water, tinge the surface for a moment, but the next wave restores its purity; in Etienne's case, however, the source itself was tainted, and each wave of time brought down to him its own dose of gall and bitterness.

In his old age, Bertrand had retained the superintendence of the stables, in order not to lose his authority in the household. His lodge was near the cabin where Etienne lived in retirement, so that he was favorably situated to watch over him with the persistent affection and cunning simplicity characteristic of old soldiers. He laid aside all his roughness of manner when he spoke to the poor child; in rainy weather he would go in search of him, gently rouse him from his musing, and lead him back to the house. He took pride in filling the duchess's place, in such manner that her son would find in him the same solicitude for his welfare, at least, if not the same love. This compassion resembled affection. Etienne submitted to the old retainer's attentions without remonstrance or resistance; but too many ties between the accursed child and his fellow-creatures were broken for any warm affection to find a place in his heart. He mechanically allowed himself to be taken care of, for he had become, as it were, an intermediate creature between man and the plant, or perhaps between man and God. To what can we compare a being to whom the social laws and the artificial sentiments of society were unknown, and who retained an enchanting innocence while obeying only the instinctive impulses of his heart? Nevertheless, despite his brooding melancholy, he soon felt the necessity of loving, of having another mother, another heart all his own; but, being separated from civilization by a barrier of iron, there was small

probability that he would fall in with a being who had transformed himself into a flower as he had done.

By dint of seeking another himself, to whom he could confide his thoughts, and whose life might be blended in his, he found at last a congenial soul in the ocean. The ocean became in his eyes an animate, thinking being. Always face to face with that boundless creation whose hidden wonders form so magnificent a contrast to those of the earth, he discovered therein the explanation of many mysteries. Having been familiar from infancy with that infinite expanse of watery fields, the sea and the sky told him wonderfully poetic tales. To him there was constant variety in that immense picture, so monotonous to others. Like all men whose souls dominate their bodies, his sight was extraordinarily keen, and he could distinguish at enormous distances, with marvellous facility and without fatigue, the most ephemeral variations of light, the most fugitive ripples on the surface of the water. Even in an absolute calm he could detect innumerable shades of color in the sea, which, like a woman's face, had an expression of its own, smiles, ideas, caprices; here green and lowering, there of a laughing blue; now joining its shimmering line to the vague gleam of the horizon, now plashing softly under orange-hued clouds. To his vision there were superb fêtes celebrated with great pomp when the sun went down, when the great luminary cast its ruddy gleam over the waves like a cloak of royal purple.

In his eyes the sea was merry, animated, overflowing with high spirits, at mid-day, when its glimmering surface reflected the brilliant glare in its myriads of dazzling facets; it laid bare to him astounding depths of melancholy, it made him shed tears when, calm, resigned, and sad, it reflected a gray, cloud-laden sky. He had learned the silent languages of that boundless creation. Its ebb and flow were like a melodious respiration, each breath of which depicted a sentiment; and he understood its secret meaning. No sailor, no scientist could have predicted more certainly than he the slightest outburst of old ocean's wrath, the slightest change in his expression. From the way in which the waves broke upon the shore, he divined hurricanes, squalls, high seas, and abnormal tides. When night spread its veil over the sky, he could still see the ocean in the twilight gleam, and would hold converse with it; he shared in its fruitful life, he felt a veritable tempest in his soul when it was wroth; he inhaled the wrath expressed in its shrill hissing, he ran with the huge waves which broke in liquid fringe on the rocks; he felt that he, like it, was fearless and awe-inspiring, and, like it, leaped hither and thither with prodigious strength; he imitated its attacks of gloomy silence, its sudden clemency. In a word, he had married the sea, it was his friend and confidant.

In the morning, when he went out upon the rocks, when he walked along the fine, glistening sand of the beach, he could detect the ocean's mood at a glance; he had a sudden vision of its varied surface,

and thus he soared over the face of the great waters like an angel from heaven. If merry, frolicsome, pale vapors cast over it a network as fine as the veil on a fiancée's brow, he followed its capricious undulations with the joy of a lover, no less enchanted to find it in the morning as coquettish as a woman just rising and still half asleep, than a husband to see his young wife once more in the resplendent beauty which pleasure has enhanced. His thoughts, married to that grand and divine thought, consoled him in his solitude, and the innumerable radiations from his soul peopled his narrow desert with sublime fancies. In short, he had at last detected in all the movements of the sea its intimate connection with the celestial mechanism, and caught glimpses of nature as a harmonious whole, from the spear of grass to the wandering stars, which, like seed borne upon the wind, seek to establish themselves in the ether. Pure as an angel, unspotted by the ideas which degrade man, innocent as a child, he lived like a sea-mew, like a flower, expending naught save the treasures of a poetic imagination, of a divine knowledge of which he alone realized the fertility and the scope.

Marvellous blending of two creations! now he raised himself to God by prayer; again he descended, humble and resigned, to the placid happiness of the brute. In his eyes the stars were the flowers of night; the sun was a father, the birds were his friends. His mother's soul was everywhere; often he saw her in the clouds; he spoke

to her, and they held real communication by means of heavenly visions; on certain days he heard her voice, was enchanted by her smile; in a word, there were days when he had not lost her! God seemed to have given him the power of the recluses of old, to have endowed him with inward senses of marvellous perfection which penetrated the very spirit of things. Mental power of incredible extent enabled him to advance further than other men in the secrets of immortal works. His regrets and his grief were like bonds uniting him to the world of spirits; he went thither, armed with his love, to seek his mother, realizing thus, by virtue of the sublime harmonies of ecstasy, the symbolical undertaking of Orpheus. He soared into the sky or into the future, even as he flew over the sea from horizon line to horizon line. Often, too, when he was stretched at the bottom of some deep cavity capriciously hollowed out of a block of granite, with an entrance as narrow as that of a wild beast's den, and softly lighted by the sun's hot rays, which shone through the fissures and showed him the dainty sea-mosses with which the retreat was decorated,—a veritable sea-fowls' nest,—often he was overcome by sleep against his will. Only the sun, his sovereign, told him that he had slept, by measuring the time during which his views of the sea, his golden sands, and his shells had disappeared from his sight. He gazed in wondering admiration at the immense cities of which his books told him, bathed in a light as bright as that of the heavens; he viewed with amazement,

but without envy, courts, kings, battles, men, and monuments. These dreams in broad daylight always made his sweet flowers, his clouds, his sun, his noble granite cliffs, dearer to him than before. In order to bind him more closely to his solitary life, an angel seemed to reveal to him the abysses of the moral world, and the terrible clash of civilizations. He felt that his heart would soon be rent asunder among those oceans of men, and would be crushed like a pearl which falls from the head-dress of a princess into the mud of the street.

II

HOW THE SON DIED

*

In 1617, twenty years and more after the horrible night during which Etienne was brought into the world, the Duc d'Hérouville, then seventy-six years of age, old and broken, almost dead, was sitting one evening, at sunset, in a huge armchair by the ogive windows of his bedroom, on the very spot where the countess had so unavailingly implored the help of God and man by her feeble blasts upon the horn. He seemed a genuine relic of the tomb. His energetic features, robbed of their threatening aspect by suffering and by age, were of a pallid hue which corresponded with the thin locks of white hair fringing his bald head; his yellow cranium seemed to indicate general debility. The warlike, fanatical spirit still gleamed in his yellow eyes, although tempered by religious feeling. The habit of devotion imparted a monastic tinge to that face, formerly so hard but now marked with lines which softened its expression. The reflection of the setting sun cast a soft red light upon that still vigorous head. The weary attitude, the utter immobility of the enfeebled body, dressed in dark clothes, completed the picture of the

monotonous existence, the ghastly repose of that man, once so enterprising, shrewd, and rugged.

"Enough," he said to his chaplain.

The venerable old man, standing before the master in a respectful attitude, was reading the Gospel. The duke, who, like the old lions in a menagerie, though decrepit, was none the less majestic, turned to another white-haired man and held out to him a skinny arm covered with white hairs, still full of nervous energy but without strength.

"Now, bone-setter," he cried, "see how I am to-day."

"All goes well, monseigneur, and the fever has disappeared. You will live for many years to come."

"I would that Maximilien were here," rejoined the duke, with a smile of satisfaction. "He's a fine fellow! he commands a company of arquebusiers now in the king's household. Maréchal d'Ancre has had an eye on my boy, and our gracious Queen Marie is looking about for a suitable match for him now that he has been created Duc de Nivròn. So my name will be worthily perpetuated! The boy performed prodigies of valor at the attack—"

At that moment, Bertrand appeared with a letter in his hand.

"What is that?" asked the old nobleman, eagerly.

"A despatch brought by a courier from the king," replied the squire.

"From the king, and not the queen-mother!" cried the duke. "What can possibly be happening?

If the Huguenots should have taken up arms again, *tête-Dieu!*" he continued, rising from his chair and casting a fiery glance at the three old men. "I would arm my soldiers, and, with Maximilien at my side, Normandie—"

"Be seated, my dear lord," said the bone-setter, disturbed to see the duke indulge in an outburst of warlike passion, dangerous in a convalescent.

"Read, Master Corbineau," said the old man, handing the despatch to his confessor.

Those four men formed a picture full of instruction concerning human life. The squire, the priest, and the physician, whitened by the lapse of years, standing before their master in his great chair, and glancing timidly at one another, each interpreted one of the ideas which finally take possession of man on the brink of the grave. The silent men, with a last beam of the setting sun shining full upon them, formed a picture teeming with melancholy significance and fertile in contrasts. That gloomy, solemn chamber, where nothing had changed in twenty-five years, was a fitting frame for that poetic page, overflowing with extinct passions, saddened by death, filled with religious faith.

"Maréchal d'Ancre has been killed on the Pont du Louvre by the king's orders; then—oh! *mon Dieu!*"

"Finish!" cried the old nobleman.

"Monseigneur le Duc de Nivron—"

"Well?"

"Is dead!"

The duke's head fell forward on his breast, he heaved a great sigh, and said not a word. At that sigh, the three old men looked at one another. It seemed to them that the wealthy and illustrious house of D'Hérouville was vanishing before their eyes like a sinking ship.

"The Master on high," said the duke at last, turning his eyes upward with a terrible expression, "displays great ingratitude to me! He does not remember the doughty deeds I have performed in His holy cause!"

"God avenges himself," said the priest in a grave voice.

"Throw that man into the dungeon!" roared the duke.

"You can impose silence upon me more easily than upon your conscience."

The duke became pensive once more.

"My house perish from the earth! my name become extinct! I will marry, and have a son!" he exclaimed, after a long pause.

Terrible as was the expression of despair on the Duc d'Hérouville's face, the bone-setter could not restrain a smile. At that moment, a voice as fresh as the evening breeze, as pure as the sky, as simple as the hue of ocean, rose in song above the murmuring of the waves as if to lay a spell upon nature. The melancholy quality of the voice, the melodious words, filled the soul like a sweet perfume. The harmony ascended in clouds, pervaded the air, poured balm upon all sorrows, or, rather, appeased

them by giving expression to them. The voice blended so perfectly with the plashing of the waves that it seemed to come from their bosom. The song was sweeter to the ears of those old men than the tenderest word of love to a maiden: it bore to them such a world of religious hopes that it echoed in their hearts like a voice from Heaven.

"What is this?" asked the duke.

"The little nightingale is singing," said Bertrand; "all is not lost, for him or for us."

"What do you mean by the nightingale?"

"It's the name we have given to monseigneur's eldest son," Bertrand replied.

"My son!" cried the old man, "I have a son, than, something that bears my name and is capable of perpetuating it?"

He sprang to his feet and began to pace the room, slowly and hurriedly by turns; then, with a commanding gesture, he dismissed his attendants, with the exception of the priest.

The next morning, the duke, leaning on his old squire's arm, walked along the shore, among the rocks, seeking the son whom he had cursed long ago; he spied him at a distance, lying in a crevice of the cliffs, stretched carelessly in the sun, with his head on a tuft of soft grass and his feet gracefully drawn up under his body. Etienne resembled a swallow at rest. As soon as the tall old man appeared on the shore, and his footsteps, deadened by the sand, could be faintly heard, mingled with the voice of the waves, Etienne turned his head, uttered

a cry like a frightened bird and disappeared in the very granite, like a mouse which returns so swiftly to its hole that one doubts if one really saw it.

"*Tête-Dieu!* where the deuce has he hidden himself?" cried the duke, when they reached the rock on which his son had been lying.

"He is there," said Bertrand, pointing to a narrow cleft, the edges of which were worn away and polished by the repeated assaults of the high tide.

"Etienne, my beloved son!" cried the old man.

The accursed child made no reply. For a great part of the morning, the old duke implored, threatened, stormed, in turn, but was unable to obtain any response. Sometimes he kept silent and put his ear to the cleft, when all that his impaired hearing could distinguish was the dull beating of Etienne's heart, whose hurried pulsations echoed loudly under the resonant stone.

"At all events, this one is alive," said the old man in a heart-rending tone.

At mid-day, the father, in desperation, had recourse to prayer.

"Etienne," he said, "my dear Etienne, God has punished me for neglecting you! he has taken your brother from me! To-day you are my only child. I love you better than I love myself. I have become convinced of my error, I know that you really have my blood and your mother's in your veins, and that her unhappiness was my work. Come, I will try to make you forget my injustice by loving you for all I have lost. Etienne, you are Duc de Nivron already,

THE KING TO THE DUKE

"Read, Master Corbineau," said the old man, handing the despatch to his confessor.

* * * * * * * * *

"Maréchal d'Ancre has been killed on the Pont du Louvre by the king's orders; then—oh! mon Dieu!"

"Finish!" cried the old nobleman.

"Monseigneur le Duc de Nivron—"

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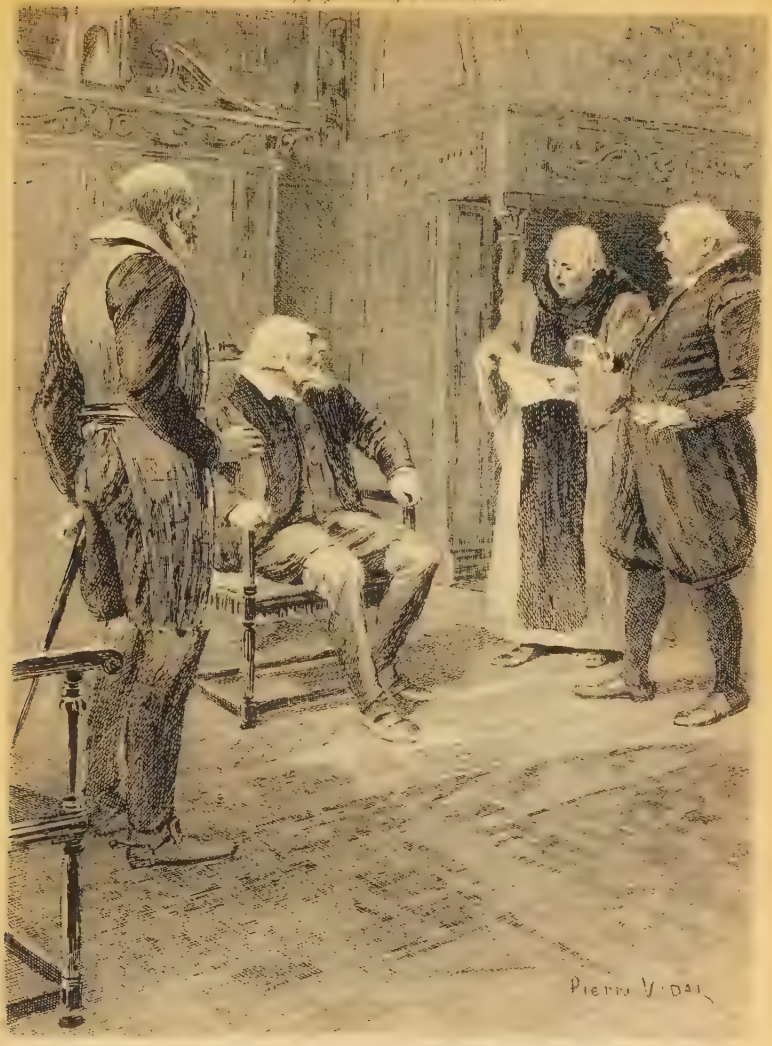

and you shall be, after I am gone, Duc d'Hérouville, peer of France, Chevalier of the Order of the Golden Fleece, captain of a hundred men-at-arms, grand *bailli* of Bessin, governor of Normandie for the king, lord of twenty-seven domains, including sixty-nine churches, and Marquis de Saint-Sever. You shall have a prince's daughter to wife. You shall be the head of the house of D'Hérouville. Do you wish to see me die of grief? Come, come forth! or I will remain here on my knees, before your retreat, until I have seen you. Your old father beseeches you, and humbles himself before his child as before God in person."

The accursed child did not understand this harangue bristling with social allusions and vanities of which he had no conception, and his heart was oppressed by a feeling of unconquerable terror. He remained silent, suffering horrible agony. Toward evening, the old man, having exhausted all the forms of speech, all the resources of prayer, and all the accents of repentance, was assailed by a species of religious contrition. He knelt on the sand and made this vow:

"I swear to erect a chapel to Saint-Jean and Saint-Etienne, my wife's patron saint and my son's, and to found a hundred masses in honor of the Virgin, if God and the saints restore to me the affection of Monsieur le Duc de Nivron, my son, here present!"

He remained on his knees, in an attitude of profound humility, with clasped hands, and prayed. But when his child, the hope of his name, failed to

appear, great tears issued from his eyes, so long dry, and rolled down his withered cheeks. At that moment, Etienne, hearing nothing more, glided to the mouth of his grotto, like a young snake hungry for the sun; he saw the downcast old man's tears, recognized the language of sorrow, seized his father's hand and kissed it, saying in an angel's voice:

"O mother, forgive me!"

In the fever of his joy, the governor of Normandie lifted his dwarfish heir, who trembled like a kidnapped maiden, and carried him away in his arms; feeling that his heart beat fast, he tried to reassure him, kissing him with as much precaution as he would have taken in handling a flower, and finding on his lips soft words which he had never before known how to utter.

"*Vrai-Dieu!* you are like my poor Jeanne, dear boy!" he said to him. "Tell me of anything that will please you, and you shall have whatever you desire. Be strong and well! I will teach you to ride on a mare as pretty and sweet-tempered as you are yourself. Nobody shall vex you. *Tête-Dieu!* everything about you shall bend to your will like reeds before the wind. I propose to give you absolute power here. I myself will obey you as the god of the family."

Ere long, the father and the son entered the lordly chamber in which the mother had passed her melancholy life. Etienne walked abruptly to the window where he had begun to live, the window from which his mother signalled to him to announce the departure

of his persecutor, who had now, for some reason unknown to him, become his slave, and resembled the gigantic creatures whom a fairy's power placed at the service of a young prince. The fairy was Feudality. When he saw once more the room of melancholy memory, where his eyes had been accustomed to gaze upon the ocean, those eyes filled with tears; the thought of his long period of misery, blended with the memories of the joys he had known in the only love which was vouchsafed to him, his mother's love,—all poured at once into his heart and formed there a sort of poem, at once enchanting and terrible. The child's emotions, accustomed as he was to pass his time in trance-like contemplation, just as others give themselves up to the excitements of life, resembled none of the usual emotions of mankind.

"Will he live?" said the old man, astounded by the weakness of his son and heir, over whom he caught himself holding his breath.

"I can live nowhere but here," said Etienne, simply, having overheard him.

"Very well, this room shall be yours, my child."

"What is happening?" said the young Duc de Nivron, as he heard the retainers of the château assembling in the *salle des gardes*, whither the duke had summoned them all to present his son to them, having had no doubt of the success of his quest.

"Come," replied his father, taking his arm and leading him into the great hall.

At that period, in France, a duke and peer, blessed

with the worldly possessions of the Duc d'Hérouville, and holding exalted offices and governorships of provinces, lived like a prince; younger sons of great families were not ashamed to enter his service; he had a household and officers thereof; the first lieutenant of his free company held a position in his household similar to that held to-day by a marshal's aides de camp. A few years later, Cardinal de Richelieu had body-guards. Several princes allied to the royal family, the Guises, Condés, Nevers, Vendômes, had pages selected from the children of the best families, the last remaining trace of dead and gone chivalry. His wealth, and the antiquity of his Norman family, denoted by his name,—*herus villa*, house of the chief,—had enabled the Duc d'Hérouville to copy the magnificence of men who were his inferiors, the d'Epernons, for example, and the Luynes, Balagnys, d'Os, and Zamets, who were looked upon in those days as parvenus, but who lived like princes, none the less. It was an imposing spectacle to poor Etienne, therefore, to see the assemblage of people attached to his father's service. The duke mounted a chair placed under one of the *soliums*, or daises of carved wood with a platform several steps above the floor, from which certain noblemen in some provinces still pronounced judgment in their seignories—scattered vestiges of the feudal system, which disappeared under the reign of Richelieu. These thrones, if we may call them so, like the church-wardens' benches in churches, have become objects of curiosity. When Etienne

found himself there, beside his father, he shuddered at the discovery that all eyes were fixed upon him.

"Do not tremble," said the duke, stooping until his bald head touched his son's ear, "for all these are our people."

In the half-light produced by the setting sun, whose beams reddened the windows of the hall, Etienne saw the *bailli*, the captains and lieutenants under arms, accompanied by a number of soldiers, the squires, the chaplain, the secretaries, the physician, the major-domo, the ushers, the intendant, the whippers-in, the gamekeepers, the footmen, and all the livery. Although they stood at the respectful distance enjoined by the terror which the old man inspired even in the most considerable persons who lived under his orders and in his province, there was a repressed murmur due to curiosity and suspense. This murmur gave Etienne a suffocating sensation; it was the first time he had felt the heavy atmosphere of a room in which a large number of people were breathing; his senses, accustomed to the pure and healthful sea-air, were offended with a promptitude which indicated their extreme delicacy. A horrible palpitation, due to some organic trouble of the heart, shook his frame with its repeated blows, when his father, obliged to play the part of a majestic old lion, delivered, in a solemn voice, the following little speech:

"My friends, this is my son Etienne, my first-born, my presumptive heir, the Duc de Nivron, upon whom the king will doubtless bestow the offices

held by his late brother; I present him to you that you may recognize him, and obey him as if he were myself. I give you warning that if one of you, or anyone in the province of which I am governor, offends the young duke or runs counter to him in anything, it would be better for him, if it comes to my knowledge, that he had never come forth from his mother's womb. You have heard? Return now to your duties, and may God guide you! The obsequies of Maximilien d'Hérouville will take place here when his body shall be brought hither. The household will wear mourning for one week. Later, we will celebrate the accession of my son Etienne."

"Vive Monseigneur! Vivent les d'Hérouville!" the assemblage shouted until the very walls groaned.

The servants brought torches to light the hall. The tumult, the bright light, and the sensations caused by his father's harangue, added to those he had already experienced, prostrated Etienne completely; he fell upon the chair, leaving his woman's hand in his father's broad one. When the duke, who had motioned to the lieutenant of his company to draw near, said to him: "Well, Baron d'Artagnon, I am overjoyed to be able to repair my loss; come and see my son!" he felt that the hand lying in his was as cold as ice; he glanced at the Duc de Nivron, thought that he was dead, and uttered a cry of alarm which terrified the company.

Beauvouloir stepped on the platform, took the young man in his arms, and carried him away, saying to his master:

"You have killed him by neglecting to prepare him for this ceremony."

"But he will not be able to get children, will he, if he is like this?" queried the duke as he followed Beauvouloir into the seignorial chamber to which the physician took the young heir to put him to bed.

"Well, master?" said the father, anxiously.

"This will amount to nothing," replied the old servitor, showing his lord that Etienne had been restored to life by a cordial of which he had given him a few drops on a lump of sugar,—a newly-discovered substance of great value, which apothecaries sold for its weight in gold.

"Take this, old rascal," said the duke, offering Beauvouloir his purse, "and take care of him like a king's son! If he should die by your fault, I would burn you on a gridiron with my own hands."

"If you continue to be so violent, the Duc de Nivron will die by your fault," was the physician's blunt retort; "leave him, he is falling asleep."

"Good-night, my love," said the old man, kissing his son on the forehead.

"Good-night, father," replied the young man; and his voice gave the duke a shock, for it was the first time that Etienne had called him father.

The duke took Beauvouloir's arm, and led him into a window recess in an adjoining room, saying:

"Ah! you old rascal, a word with you!"

This epithet, which was the duke's favorite term of endearment, made the physician smile; he had long since given up his necromancing.

"You know," continued the duke, "that I bear you no ill-will. You delivered my poor Jeanne twice, you cured my poor Maximilien of a dangerous disease, and you are one of my household. Poor boy! I will avenge him, I will take it upon myself to deal with the man who killed him! Now the whole future of the house of D'Hérouville is in your hands. I wish to marry this boy without delay. You alone can tell whether there is in this abortion the stuff with which to make D'Hérouvilles. You hear. What do you think?"

"His life on the seashore has been so pure and chaste that nature is more active in him than it would have been had he lived in your social circle. But so delicate a body is the very humble servant of the mind. Monseigneur Etienne should select his wife for himself, for everything in him will be the work of nature and not of your will. He will love ingenuously, and will do, in obedience to his heart's desire, what you wish him to do for the sake of your name. Offer your son a *grande dame* who resembles a hackney, and he will go and hide among his cliffs. Moreover, while a severe fright would surely kill him, I believe that too sudden happiness would strike him down no less surely. To avoid this calamity, Etienne should, in my opinion, be allowed to enter of his own motion and at his own pleasure the pathway of love. I tell you, monseigneur, although you are a great and powerful prince, you do not understand such matters at all. Honor me with your entire, unlimited confidence, and you shall have a grandson."

"If I obtain a grandson by any witchcraft whatsoever, I will see to it that you are ennobled. Yes, although it may be difficult, you shall be transformed from an old rascal into a gallant gentleman, you shall be Beauvouloir, Baron de Forcalier. Employ all possible means, natural magic and the black art, nine-days' prayers in church, and dances at the witches' revel,—provided that I have a male heir, all will be well."

"I know," said Beauvouloir, "a chapter of sorcerers quite capable of spoiling everything; I mean no other than yourself, monseigneur. I know you. To-day, you long for an heir at any price; to-morrow, you will want to lay down conditions to govern the coming of that heir, you will torment your son—"

"God forbid!"

"Very well; then go to court, where the marshal's death and the king's emancipation must have turned everything topsy-turvy, and where you have work to do, were it only to obtain the marshal's baton which has been promised you. Leave me to manage Monseigneur Etienne. But pledge me your word as a gentleman to approve whatever I do."

The duke grasped the old man's hand in token of his entire assent, and withdrew to his apartment.

When the days of an exalted and powerful person are numbered, the physician is an important personage in the house. We must not be surprised, therefore, to find an ex-bone-setter on such familiar terms with the Duc d'Hérouville. Apart from the illegitimate bonds which connected him with that

great family through his marriage, and which militated in his favor, the duke had so often tested the scientist's sound sense, that he had made him one of his favorite advisers. Beauvouloir was the Coyctier of this Louis XI. But, great as was the value of his learning, the physician had less influence than feudal prejudices upon the governor of Normandie, in whom still breathed the ferocious spirit of the religious wars. So that he had divined that the prejudices of the noble would affect injuriously the wishes of the father. Like the great physician that he was, Beauvouloir understood that in one so delicately constituted as Etienne marriage should be a gradual, soothing inspiration which would infuse new strength into him by revivifying him with the fire of love. As he had said, to force a wife upon Etienne would be to kill him. Above all things, they must avoid frightening him with the idea of marriage, of which he knew nothing, and must keep him in ignorance of the purpose upon which his father was bent. This unknown poet was fitted for naught save a noble and beautiful passion like Petrarch's for Laura or Dante's for Beatrice. Like his mother, he was all pure love, and wholly soul; they must give him the opportunity and await results, not try to force them; a command would have exhausted the very springs of life in him.

*

Master Antoine Beauvouloir was a father; he had a daughter brought up under conditions which made her the one woman in the world for Etienne. It was so difficult to foresee the events which transformed a child destined by his father for the cardinalate into the heir presumptive of the house of D'Hérouville, that Beauvouloir had never noticed the similarity between Etienne's bringing up and Gabrielle's. It was a sudden thought suggested by his devotion to the two young creatures rather than by his ambition. Despite his skill, his wife had died in labor when his daughter was born, and the child was so frail that he thought that her mother must have bequeathed to her the seeds of death. Beauvouloir loved his Gabrielle as all old men love their only child. His skill and his unremitting care imparted an artificial life to the fragile creature, whom he cultivated as carefully as a florist cultivates a strange plant. He had hidden her from all eyes on his estate of Forcalier, where she was sheltered from the disasters of the time by the kindly feeling universally entertained for a man to whom everyone owed a taper, and whose scientific powers inspired a sort of respectful awe. By attaching himself to the house of D'Hérouville, he had added to the immunities which he enjoyed in the province, and had thwarted the attacks of his enemies by his formidable position in the governor's

family; but, when he came to the château, he was far too prudent to bring thither the flower that he kept buried at Forcalier, a domain more important by virtue of its dependent estates than as a place of abode; he relied upon it as a means of finding for his daughter a match in conformity with his views. When he promised the old duke a grandson and required his promise to approve his conduct, he suddenly thought of Gabrielle, of that sweet child whose mother the duke had forgotten as he had forgotten his son Etienne. He awaited the duke's departure before putting his plan in execution, foreseeing that, if the duke were aware of it, the tremendous obstacles which might be removed if the thing were actually done would be insurmountable at the very beginning.

Master Beauvouloir's house faced the south, on the slope of one of those low hills which surround the valleys of Normandie; a thick forest lay to the north; high walls and Norman hedges, with deep ditches, formed an impenetrable barrier on that side. The garden sloped gently down to the river which watered the fields of the valley, and on which the high bank of a double hedge-row formed a natural pier at that point. Through that hedge-row ran a hidden winding path, which followed the sinuosities of the stream, and, because of the dense growth of willows and oaks and beeches, was as shadowy and solitary as a forest path. Between the house and this natural rampart was a broad expanse of the rich verdure peculiar to that fertile province, a lovely

green plain shaded by a fringe of scattered trees, whose various shades of green formed a tastefully-colored tapestry: here the silvery foliage of a fir stood out against the dark green of a clump of alders; there, before a group of venerable oaks, a slender poplar reared its ever-waving branches; farther on, weeping willows drooped their pale branches between huge round-topped walnuts. This fringe of trees enabled one to go from the house to the river at any hour of the day, without fear of the sun's rays.

The façade, in front of which wound the yellow ribbon of a gravelled terrace, was shaded by a wooden gallery covered with climbing plants which, in the month of May, tossed their flowers in at the first-floor windows. Although it was not of great size, the garden seemed immense because of the way in which the paths were cut; and its view-points, cleverly arranged on the highest land, commanded those in the valley, where the eye could range freely. Following the instinctive bidding of her thought, Gabrielle could either seek the solitude of a confined space, where she could see nothing save the thick turf and the blue sky between the tree-tops, or allow her eyes to roam over the loveliest of landscapes, following the shading of the lines of green from the foreground, where they were so dazzlingly brilliant, to the purest depths of the horizon, where they faded away, sometimes into the blue ocean of the air, sometimes into the mountains of clouds floating therein.

Cared for by her grandmother, waited upon by her nurse, Gabrielle Beauvouloir left that modest abode only to go to the little church, whose steeple rose at the top of the hill, and whither her grandmother, her nurse, and her father's footman always accompanied her. Thus she had reached the age of seventeen in the fascinating ignorance which the scarcity of books enabled a young girl to preserve without appearing eccentric, at a time when well-educated women were rare phenomena. That house had been like a convent, plus liberty and minus compulsory prayer, where she had lived under the eyes of a devout old woman and under the protection of her father, the only man she had ever seen. This profound solitude, made necessary from her birth by the apparent feebleness of her constitution, had been sedulously maintained by Beauvouloir. As Gabrielle grew older, the care which was lavished upon her and the influence of pure air had, in very truth, given her fragile youth new strength. Nevertheless, the skilful physician could not delude himself with false hopes when he saw the mother-of-pearl circles around his child's eyes soften, grow dark, or become inflamed according to her emotions: weakness of body and strength of soul were indicated by symptoms which his long practice enabled him to recognize. Moreover, Gabrielle's divine beauty had caused him to dread enterprises of the sort that were so common in those days of violence and sedition. Innumerable reasons, therefore, led this fond father to intensify the shadow and the solitude which

encompassed his daughter, whose excessive sensibility terrified him; a sudden passion, an attempt at rape, an attack of any kind would have inflicted a fatal wound upon her.

Although his daughter rarely transgressed, a reproachful word distressed her beyond measure; she kept it in her heart, where it sank deep and engendered a meditative sadness; she would go away to weep, and weep a long time. In the case of Gabrielle, therefore, the moral education required no less care than the physical education. The old physician had been obliged to give up telling his daughter the stories in which children delight, for they made too deep an impression on her. And this man, whom long practice had made so skilful, did his utmost to develop his daughter's body, in order to deaden the blows dealt by so energetic a mind. As Gabrielle was his whole life, his love, his sole heiress, he had never hesitated to procure such things as were likely to assist in bringing about the desired result. He carefully kept from her sight books, pictures, music, all the creations of art which might stimulate her mind. With his mother's assistance, he interested Gabrielle in manual employment. Embroidery, sewing, lacemaking, gardening, housekeeping, gathering fruit, in a word, all the most material occupations of life were given to the fascinating child for her intellect to feed upon; Beauvouloir brought her beautiful spinning-wheels, handsomely-wrought chests, rich carpets, pottery made by Bernard Palissy, tables, prie-Dieus, chairs curiously

carved and upholstered in rich stuffs, diapered linen, and jewels. With the instinct which paternity gives, the old man always selected his gifts among the works of which the ornamentation was of the fanciful sort called arabesques, and which, speaking neither to the senses nor the heart, appeal to the intellect alone by creations of pure fancy.

Thus, strangely enough, the life which a father's hatred had imposed upon Etienne d'Hérouville, paternal love had counselled Beauvouloir to impose upon Gabrielle. In both of these children the soul was likely to kill the body; and except for the profound solitude, prescribed in the one case by mere chance, and by science in the other, they were certain to succumb, one to terror, the other to the weight of a too passionate love. But, alas! instead of living in a region of moor and fen, where nature is cold and her outlines stiff and harsh, amid such scenery as all great painters have chosen for a background to their Virgins, Gabrielle lived in the heart of a fertile and luxuriant valley. Beauvouloir was unable to destroy the harmonious arrangement of the natural thickets, the graceful grouping of the flower-beds, the yielding freshness of the green turf, the love expressed by the entwining of the climbing plants. These vivacious elements of poesy had a language of their own, which Gabrielle heard rather than understood, as she abandoned herself to vague reveries in the dense shade; through the hazy ideas suggested by her admiration of nature under a clear sky, and by her long study of that landscape which

she had observed in all the aspects imprinted upon it by the changing seasons, and the variations of a sea-air in which the fogs of England die and the clear skies of France have their beginning, there arose in her mind a far-away light, a ray of dawn which pierced the shadows in which her father had hidden her.

Nor had Beauvouloir removed Gabrielle from the influence of the divine love, and with her admiration of nature was blended adoration of the Creator; she had entered the first path open to a woman's emotions: she loved God, she loved Jesus, the Virgin, and the saints; she loved the Church and its ceremonies; she was a Catholic after the manner of Saint Theresa, who saw in Jesus a husband who could do no wrong, a marriage for all eternity. But Gabrielle abandoned herself to this passion of strong characters with such touching simplicity, that she would have disarmed the most brutal seducer by the childish artlessness of her language.

Whither was this life of innocence leading Gabrielle? How should one instruct an intelligence as pure as the water of a placid lake which had never reflected aught save the azure of the sky? What images should be drawn upon that spotless canvas? About what tree should that convolvulus, with its snow-white flowers, be trained?—The father never asked himself these questions without an inward shudder.

At this moment, the worthy old physician was riding slowly along on his mule, as if he would have

liked to spin out forever the journey from the Château d'Hérouville to Ourscamp, the name of the village near which his estate of Forcalier was situated. His boundless love for his daughter had led him to form such an audacious plan! there was but one human being in the whole world who could make her happy, and that one was Etienne. Surely, Jeanne de Saint-Savin's angelic son and Gertrude Marana's innocent daughter were twin creatures. Any other woman than Gabrielle would terrify the heir-presumptive of the house of D'Hérouville and cause his death; even as it seemed to Beauvouloir that Gabrielle would die from contact with any man whose external aspect and whose sentiments lacked Etienne's maidenly delicacy. Indeed, it was not the poor physician's fault, for Chance had taken pleasure in the thought of bringing these two together, and had ordained that it should be. But, under Louis XIII., to presume to inveigle the Duc d'Hérouville into marrying his only son to a Norman bone-setter's daughter! And yet, from this marriage alone could result the posterity which the old duke imperiously demanded. Nature had destined those two beautiful creatures for each other, God had brought them together by a most extraordinary concatenation of events, whereas the prevailing ideas and the laws placed impassable chasms between them.

Although the old man believed that he saw God's finger in all this, and in spite of the promise he had extorted from the duke, he was assailed by such apprehensions at the thought of the violent outbreaks

of that untamed nature, that he turned back just as he reached the summit of the hill opposite the hill of Ourscamp, and could see the smoke rising from his roof among the trees of his domain. His illegitimate relationship to his master through his wife's mother, a consideration which might have some weight with the duke, finally turned the scale. And, having once made his decision, Beauvouloir trusted in the chances of life; it might be that the duke would die before the marriage; furthermore, he relied upon precedents: a peasant of Dauphiné, Françoise Mignot, had recently married the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, and the son of the Constable Anne de Montmorency had married Diane, daughter of Henri II. and a Piedmontese lady named Philippe Duc.

During this deliberation, while the father's love was calculating all the probabilities, comparing the chances of good fortune and of evil fortune, and trying to discern the future by weighing its elements, Gabrielle was walking in the garden, culling flowers to embellish the vases made by the famous potter, who did with enamel what Benvenuto Cellini did with metals. Gabrielle had placed a vase, decorated with animals in relief, on a table, and filled it with flowers to please her grandmother, and, perhaps, to give form to her own thoughts as well. The tall vase of Limoges porcelain was completely filled, placed on the rich table-cover, and Gabrielle was just saying to her grandmother: "Look at that!" when Beauvouloir entered. The girl ran and threw herself into her father's arms. After the first effusive

outbursts of affection, Gabrielle insisted that the old man should admire the bouquet; but, after glancing at it, Beauvouloir fixed his eyes upon his daughter in an intent gaze which brought the blood to her cheeks.

"It is time!" he said to himself, understanding the language of those flowers, each of which had evidently been studied as to both shape and coloring, for each was so placed as to produce a magic effect on the bouquet.

Gabrielle stood in front of her father, heedless of the flower she had begun on her embroidery frame. At sight of his child, a tear glistened in Beauvouloir's eye, rolled down his face, which continued, but with difficulty, to maintain a stern expression, and fell upon his shirt, which, according to the fashion of the period, was visible beneath his open doublet, above his breeches. He tossed aside his hat, in which an old red plume was stuck, so that he could rub his hand over his bald head. As he gazed once more, beneath the dark rafters of that room with its leather hangings, its ebony furniture, its heavy silk portières and high mantel, all illumined by a mellow light, upon his daughter, who was still all his, the poor father felt tears gathering in his eyes and wiped them away. A father who loves his child would like to keep her young forever; as for him who can see without deep sorrow his daughter passing under the domination of a man, he is not ascending toward the upper worlds, but is sinking down into the lowest depths of space.

"What is the matter, my son?" queried the old

mother, removing her spectacles and seeking in the goodman's manner, ordinarily so jovial and cheery, the reason of a silence which surprised her.

The old physician pointed to his daughter, and the grandmother nodded with a satisfied air, as if to say: "She is very sweet!"

Who would not have experienced Beauvouloir's emotion at sight of the girl as she appeared in the costume of the period and the clear light of Normandie? She wore a waist pointed in front and square behind, of the kind in which the Italian painters almost always dressed their saints and Madonnas. That dainty garment of sky-blue velvet, as pretty as a water-nymph's, enveloped the waist like a *guimpe*, so compressing it as to give a most graceful curve to the outlines, which it seemed to flatten slightly; it moulded the shoulders, the back, the waist, with the sharpness of a drawing made by the most skilful artist, and ended at the neck in an oval opening surrounded with a narrow edging of carmelite-colored silk, leaving bare as much as was necessary to display the beauty of the woman, but not enough to arouse desire. A skirt of the same color as the edging prolonged the lines designed by the velvet waist, and fell about her feet in narrow and, as it were, flattened folds. Her waist was so slender that Gabrielle seemed tall. Her tiny arms hung at her sides with the listlessness which deep thought imparts to the attitude. Standing thus, she was a living model of the ingenuous masterpieces of statuary for which there was then a decided taste,

and which arouse admiration by the grace of their outlines, straight without stiffness, and by the vigor of designs which do not exclude all thought of life. Never did the profile of a swallow, skimming by a window at dusk, present more graceful curves. Gabrielle's face was thin without being flat; over her neck and her forehead ran a multitude of bluish threads, shaded like the agate, and bringing out the delicacy of a complexion so transparent that one might have fancied he could see the blood flowing in the veins. This excessive pallor was faintly tinged with pink on the cheeks. Her fair hair, of the same shade throughout, was partly concealed beneath a little blue velvet, pearl-embroidered cap, flowed like two rippling golden streams over her temples, and played in curly ringlets on her shoulders, which it did not cover. The warm, sunny color of that silky hair enlivened the dazzling whiteness of the neck, and made even purer by its reflection the pure outlines of the face. The eyes, which were long and, as it were, compressed between heavy lids, were in harmony with the delicacy of the head and body; their pearl-gray shone without vivacity, and in them innocence held passion in check. The line of the nose would have seemed as cold as a steel blade, but for the soft, pink nostrils, whose quivering seemed out of harmony with the purity of a reflective brow, often astonished, sometimes laughing, and always marked by an august serenity. Lastly, an alert little ear attracted the eye, peeping out from under the cap, between two locks of hair,

and displaying a lobe of a brilliant ruby which stood out in striking contrast to the milky whiteness of the neck. Hers was neither the Norman type of beauty, in which flesh abounds, nor the Southern type, in which passion magnifies substance, nor the common French type, as ephemeral as its expressions, nor the cold and melancholy beauty of the North; it was the profound and seraphic beauty of the Catholic Church, at once supple and rigid, stern and tender.

"Where could one find a prettier duchess?" said Beauvouloir to himself, watching Gabrielle with delight as she leaned forward slightly and stretched out her neck to follow the flight of a bird out-of-doors; she could be compared to naught save a gazelle that had stopped to listen to the murmur of the water to which she was going to quench her thirst.

"Come and sit here," said Beauvouloir, patting his knee and making a sign to Gabrielle which promised a confidential communication.

Gabrielle understood and went to him. She seated herself on her father's knee as lightly as the gazelle, and put her arm about his neck, rumpling his collar by so doing.

"What were you thinking about when you picked these flowers? You never arranged them so daintily before."

"Many things," she replied. "As I admired the flowers, which seem to have been made for us, I was wondering for whom we were made, what sort of beings are looking at us. You are my father, so I can tell you what takes place in my mind; you are

clever, you will explain everything. I feel within me something like a force struggling to exert itself, to contend with something. When the sky is gray, I am half-content, I am melancholy but calm. When it is fine, when the flowers smell sweet and I sit yonder on my bench, under the honeysuckles and jasmine, it is as if waves arose within me and beat against my immobility. Ideas come into my mind which jostle me, so to speak, then fly away like the birds which fly against our windows at night; I cannot detain them. When I have made a bouquet in which the colors are blended as in a piece of tapestry, in which the red melts into the white, and the brown and the green intermingle, in which every color abounds; when the air plays among them, when the flowers jostle one another, when there is a blending of odors and of petals, I am happy, in a measure, because I recognize what takes place in myself. When the organ plays in church and the clergy respond, when there are two distinct chants speaking to each other, the human voices and the instrument, then I am content, the harmony finds an echo in my breast, I pray with a pleasure which quickens my blood."

As Beauvouloir listened to his daughter, he scrutinized her with a sagacious eye: his glance would have seemed unmeaning by virtue of the very power of his flashing thoughts, just as the water of a cascade seems motionless. He raised the veil of flesh which concealed from him the secret mechanism whereby the mind reacts upon the body, he recurred

to the diverse symptoms which in his long experience he had noticed in the multitude of people entrusted to his care, and compared them to the symptoms exhibited by that frail body, whose bones alarmed him by their exiguity, whose milk-white flesh terrified him by its lack of firmness; and he tried to apply the conclusions of his experience and skill to the future of that angelic child; but his brain whirled when he found himself, as it were, on the brink of a precipice; Gabrielle's too vibrant voice, her too slender frame, made him anxious, and he questioned himself after questioning her.

"You are always ill here!" he cried at last, acting upon the final conclusion to which his meditation had led him.

She bent her head slightly.

"God be merciful!" said the old man, with a sigh. "I will take you to the Château d'Hérouville; there you can take sea-baths, which will strengthen you."

"Do you really mean it, father? Aren't you making sport of your Gabrielle? I have longed to see the château, the men-at-arms, the captains and monseigneur!"

"I mean it, my child. Your nurse and Jean will attend you."

"Will it be soon?"

"To-morrow," said the old man, rushing into the garden to conceal his agitation from his mother and his daughter.

"God is my witness," he exclaimed, "that I am impelled by no ambitious thought. To save my

daughter, to make poor Etienne happy, those are my only motives!"

His reason for searching his conscience thus was that he felt, in the innermost depths of his being, an indescribable satisfaction in the thought that, if his scheme were successful, Gabrielle would some day be Duchesse d'Hérouville. There is always something of the man in the father. He walked about a long while, returned to the house to sup, and amused himself throughout the evening gazing at his daughter amid the subdued, charmingly poetic surroundings to which he had accustomed her.

When, before retiring, the grandmother, the nurse, Beauvouloir, and Gabrielle knelt to pray together, he said to them:

"Let us pray to God to bless my undertaking!"

The eyes of the grandmother, who was aware of her son's plan, were wet with such tears as she had left to shed. The inquisitive Gabrielle's face was flushed with joy. The father trembled, he was so afraid of a catastrophe.

"After all," said the grandmother, "don't alarm yourself, Antoine. The duke will not kill his granddaughter!"

"No," he replied, "but he might force her to marry some swaggering baron who would treat her brutally."

The next day, Gabrielle, mounted on an ass, and attended by her nurse on foot, her father on his mule, and the servant leading two horses laden with luggage, set out for the Château d'Hérouville, where

the caravan arrived at nightfall. In order to keep the journey secret, Beauvouloir had started early in the morning and made long detours, and he had taken a supply of provisions to eat on the road, so that they need not show themselves at any inn. Under cover of the darkness, and unnoticed by the servants of the château, he went to the cabin which the accursed child had occupied so long, and where Bertrand, the only person he had taken into his confidence, was awaiting him. The old squire assisted the physician, the nurse, and the footman to unload the horses, carry the packages into the house, and install Beauvouloir's daughter in Etienne's former abode. When Bertrand saw Gabrielle, he was thunderstruck.

"It seems as if I were looking at madame!" he cried. "She is thin and slender like her; she has her pale cheeks and her fair hair; the old duke will love her."

"God grant it!" said Beauvouloir. "But will he recognize his blood through mine?"

"He can hardly deny her," said Bertrand. "I often went to wait for him at the *Fair Roman's* door on Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine. The Cardinal de Lorraine resigned her to monseigneur, perforce, for very shame at having been ill-used when he was leaving her house. Monseigneur, who, at that time, was not far from twenty years old, must remember that ambuscade; he was already very bold, for—I can venture to say it to-day—he led the ambuscaders!"

"He has forgotten all about that," said Beauvouloir; "he knows that my wife is dead, but he hardly knows that I have a daughter!"

"Two old campaigners like us will bring the ship safe into port," said Bertrand. "After all, if the duke does lose his temper and vent his spleen on our carcasses, they have had their day."

Before leaving the château, the Duc d'Hérouville had forbidden, under the severest penalties, one and all of his retainers to go to that portion of the shore where Etienne had passed his life, unless the Duc de Nivron should bid someone attend him thither. This order, suggested by Beauvouloir, who had urged the necessity of leaving Etienne at liberty to continue his former habits, assured Gabrielle and the nurse the inviolability of the little domain, which the physician ordered them never to leave without his permission.

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During these two days, Etienne had remained in the seignorial chamber, where he was detained by the fascination of painful memories. That bed had been his mother's; a few steps away she had gone through the terrible scenes of her confinement, when Beauvouloir had saved two lives; she had confided her thoughts to that furniture, she had used it, her eyes had often wandered over that wainscoting; how many times had she come to yonder window to summon, by a signal or a cry, her poor disowned child, now the sovereign master of the château! Alone in that chamber, to which he had come by stealth on his last visit, brought thither by Beauvouloir to give his dying mother one last kiss, he fancied that she had returned to life, he talked to her and listened to her; he drank deep of that inexhaustible spring from which issue so many hymns like the *Super flumina Babylonis*.

On the day following his return, Beauvouloir went to his master, and reproved him gently for remaining in his room, reminding him that he must not replace his life in the open air by the life of a prisoner.

"This room is very large," Etienne replied, "my mother's spirit is here."

However, by means of the gentle influence of affection, the physician induced Etienne to promise that he would walk every day, either on the shore or

in the surrounding country, which was unfamiliar to him. But Etienne, still absorbed by his reminiscences, remained at his window the next day until evening, gazing intently at the sea; it presented such a variety of aspects, that it seemed to him he had never seen it so lovely. He interspersed his contemplations with passages from Petrarch, one of his favorite authors, the one whose poesy was most congenial to his heart by reason of the constancy and smooth current of his love. Etienne had not in him the material for more passions than one; he could love in but one way and but once. Although that love would be intense, like every sentiment that stands alone, it would be calm in its expression, as sweet and pure as the sonnets of the Italian poet. At sunset, the child of solitude began to sing in that marvellous voice, which had entered, like a ray of hope, ears most insensible to music, his father's. He gave expression to his melancholy thoughts by variations upon a single air, which he repeated several times, after the manner of the nightingale. This air, attributed to the late King Henri IV., was not *Gabrielle*, but one far superior in structure, in harmony, and expression, which those interested in the olden time will recognize by the words, also written by the king. The air was doubtless suggested by the refrains which had lulled him to sleep in childhood among the mountains of Béarn:

"Come, dawn,
I implore thee,
Blithe am I when I see thee;

The maid
Who is dear to me,
Is rosy-cheeked like thee;
With dew-drops
Glistening
The rose is less fair to see;
The ermine
Less glossy is,
The lily less white than thee."

After he had thus artlessly interpreted the thoughts of his heart by his song, Etienne gazed anew at the sea, saying to himself:

"There is my betrothed and my only love!"

Then he sang this other measure of the ballad:

"She is fair
Beyond compare!"

and repeated it, giving expression to the suppliant poesy overabundant in a timid young man, who dares much when he is alone. There were dreams in that undulating song, which was constantly interrupted, then began anew, and finally died away in one last strain, the notes growing fainter and fainter like the vibrations of a bell. At that moment, a voice which he was tempted to attribute to some siren emerging from the sea, a woman's voice, repeated the air he had just sung, but with all the hesitation to be expected from a person to whom the existence of music was revealed for the first time; he recognized the faltering accents of a heart just waking to a realization of the poesy of melody. Etienne alone, to

whom persistent study of his own voice had taught the language of musical tones, in which the soul finds as many resources as in spoken words, for the expression of its thoughts, could divine all that those attempts signified in the way of timid surprise. With what devout and subtle admiration had he been listened to! The calmness of the atmosphere enabled him to hear everything, and he trembled at the rustling of the floating folds of a dress; he, whom the excitement caused by fear always drove to the very brink of the grave, was amazed to feel the sensation as of a soothing balm formerly caused by his mother's coming.

"Come, Gabrielle, my child," said Beauvouloir, "I have forbidden you to remain on the shore after sunset. Go into the house, my daughter."

"Gabrielle!" said Etienne to himself, "what a pretty name!"

Beauvouloir soon reappeared and roused his master from one of those fits of meditation which resembled dreams. It was dark, the moon was just rising.

"Monseigneur," said the physician, "you have not yet been out to-day; it is not wise."

"But can I go on the shore after sunset?" queried Etienne.

The hidden meaning of this query, which betrayed the gentle craft of a first desire, made the old man smile.

"You have a daughter, Beauvouloir?"

"Yes, monseigneur, the child of my old age, my beloved child. Monseigneur le duc, your illustrious

father, enjoined upon me so forcibly the necessity of watching over your precious life, that, being unable to continue my visits to Forcalier, where she was, I have taken her away from there, to my great regret, and, in order to shield her from all eyes, I have put her in the house which monseigneur formerly occupied. She is so delicate, that I fear the effect of everything upon her, even of a too intense emotion; and so I have had no instruction given her, for she would have killed herself."

"She knows nothing, then?" inquired Etienne, in amazement.

"She has all the talents of a good housekeeper; but she has lived as a plant lives. Ignorance, monseigneur, is as blessed a thing as knowledge; knowledge and ignorance are two methods of existence for human beings; both alike preserve the mind as in a winding-sheet; knowledge has given you life; ignorance will save my daughter. Pearls carefully hidden escape the diver, and live on in happiness. I can compare my Gabrielle to a pearl, for her complexion has its transparence, her soul its soft lustre, and hitherto my estate of Forcalier has served as her shell."

"Come with me," said Etienne, wrapping himself in a cloak, "I am going to the shore; it is a lovely night."

Beauvouloir and his master walked along in silence until a light shining out between the shutters of the fisherman's cabin cast a shimmering golden beam on the sea.

"I cannot express the sensation produced in my mind by the sight of light shining on the sea!" said the timid heir to the physician, "I have so often gazed at the window of yonder room until its light went out!" he added, pointing to his mother's chamber.

"Delicate as Gabrielle is," rejoined Beauvouloir, gayly, "she can come out and walk with us; it is a warm night, and there is no dampness in the air; I will go and call her. But be sensible, monseigneur."

Etienne was too shy to propose accompanying Beauvouloir to the fisherman's cabin; moreover, he was in the state of torpor produced by the rush of ideas and sensations to which the dawn of passion gives birth. More at ease when he was left alone, he cried, as he looked upon the moonlit sea:

"The ocean has passed into my soul!"

The aspect of the charming animate statuette which came toward him, enveloped in the moon's silvery light, redoubled the palpitations of Etienne's heart, but caused him no pain.

"This is monseigneur, my child," said Beauvouloir.

At that moment, poor Etienne longed for his father's colossal stature, he would have liked to appear a strong man and not a puny creature. All the forms of vanity known to man and to love entered his heart at one time like so many arrows, and he maintained a stupefied silence, measuring for the first time the extent of his imperfections. Embarrassed at the outset by the girl's salutation,

he returned it awkwardly and kept beside Beauvouloir, with whom he talked as they walked along the shore; but Gabrielle's timid and respectful manner gave him courage, and he ventured at last to speak to her. The incident of the song was mere chance; the physician had preferred to lay no plans, he thought that, between two beings whose hearts solitude had preserved unsullied, love would spring to life in all its simplicity. Thus Gabrielle's repetition of the air was a subject of conversation ready to their hands.

During that walk, Etienne was conscious of the lightness of body which all men feel at the moment when the first love transports the active principle of their life into another creature. He offered to teach Gabrielle to sing. The poor fellow was so overjoyed to exhibit himself to the young woman as possessed of superior talent in some direction, that he trembled with pleasure when she accepted. At that moment, the light shone full upon Gabrielle and enabled Etienne to detect the vague resemblance she bore to the late duchess. Beauvouloir's daughter, like Jeanne de Saint-Savin, was slender and of delicate build; in her, as in the duchess, pain and melancholy had produced a mysterious charm. She had the nobility of bearing peculiar to those hearts which the manners of the world have not changed, and in whom everything is attractive because everything is natural. But in Gabrielle there were also traces of the blood of the *Fair Roman*, which had been transmitted to the third generation and which gave to that

child the heart of a passionate courtesan in a chaste soul; thence proceeded an exaltation which brought a flush to her cheeks, which purified her brow, which caused her to exhale a sort of radiance, and imparted the vivacity of a flame to her movements. Beauvouloir trembled when he observed this phenomenon, which one might call to-day the phosphorescence of thought, and which the physician regarded as an omen of death. Etienne surprised the girl putting her head forward like a frightened bird peeping out of its nest. Hiding behind her father, she wished to examine Etienne at her leisure, and her glance expressed as much curiosity as pleasure, as much goodwill as innocent temerity. In her eyes, Etienne was not weak, but delicate; he seemed to her so like herself, that nothing about him held her in awe; his sickly complexion, his beautiful hands, his wan smile, his hair parted in the middle and falling in long curls over his lace collar, that noble brow furrowed by premature wrinkles, the contrast of splendor and misery, of power and powerlessness, pleased her; for did they not flatter the longing to play the part of a mother which love contains in germ? did they not stimulate the determination which besets every woman to find marks of distinction in the man she wishes to love? In both alike, new ideas and sensations arose with a force and abundance which enlarged their minds; they maintained the silence of profound surprise, for the expression of the feelings becomes less demonstrative as they increase in intensity. All durable love begins with dreamy musings.

It was most fitting, perhaps, for these two to meet for the first time by the soft light of the moon, so that they might not be suddenly blinded by the splendors of love; it was fitting that they should meet by the seashore, which offered an image of the immensity of their emotions. They parted, filled with thoughts of each other, mutually fearing that they had failed to please.

From his window Etienne watched the light in the house where Gabrielle was. During that hour of mingled hope and dread, the young poet found new meaning in Petrarch's sonnets. He had caught a glimpse of Laura, a graceful, enchanting figure, as pure and radiant as a sunbeam, as intelligent as the angels, as weak as woman. His twenty years of study had one connecting-link, he understood the mysterious alliance between all forms of beauty; he realized how large a part woman played in the poems he adored; in truth, he had been in love so long without knowing it, that his whole past melted into the emotions of that lovely night. Gabrielle's resemblance to his mother seemed the result of a divine command. He did not betray his sorrow by loving, for this love was a continuation of his mother's love. His mind dwelt upon the child sleeping in that cabin with the same feelings which his mother experienced when he was sleeping there. This other point of resemblance served to bind the present more closely to the past. On the clouds of his memory, Jeanne de Saint-Savin's grief-stricken face appeared before him; he saw her once more

with her faint smile, he heard her sweet voice, she bowed her head and wept.

The light in the cabin went out. Etienne sang Henri IV.'s pretty ballad with renewed expression. Gabrielle's hesitating voice answered in the distance. The maiden also was taking her first journey into the enchanted regions of amorous ecstasy. This response filled Etienne's heart with joy; the blood coursed through his veins with a force he had never felt, love made him strong. Feeble natures alone can understand the ecstasy of this new creation in the midst of life. The poor, the sick, the maltreated, know ineffable joy; a trifle is the whole universe to them. Etienne was in many ways akin to the people of the Sorrowful City. His recent rise from obscurity to grandeur caused him only terror, but love poured into his heart the balsam that gives strength: he loved love.

The next morning Etienne rose betimes, to hasten to his former abode, where Gabrielle, aflame with curiosity, spurred on by an impatience which she did not acknowledge to herself, had curled her hair and donned her most charming costume early in the morning. Both were overflowing with longing to meet again, and they mutually dreaded the results of the interview. As for him, consider that he had selected his finest lace, his most beautifully trimmed cloak, his violet velvet knee-breeches; in a word, he had donned that splendid costume which recalls to all memories the pale face of Louis XIII., a face sorrowful in the midst of grandeur, as Etienne's had

been hitherto. Nor was this costume the only point of resemblance between the sovereign and the subject. Etienne, like Louis XIII., was distinguished for a multitude of refined sentiments: chastity, melancholy, vague but genuine suffering, chivalrous timidity, the fear of being unable to express his feeling in all its purity, the fear of attaining too rapidly the happiness which great minds prefer to postpone, the sense of the burden of power, the inclination to obedience which is found in natures indifferent to selfish interests, but overflowing with love for what a noble religious genius has named the *astral*.

Although entirely without experience in the world, it had occurred to Gabrielle that the bone-setter's daughter, the humble châtelaine of Forcalier, was much too far removed from Monseigneur Etienne, Duc de Nivron, the heir of the D'Hérouvilles, for them to be considered equals; she had not gone so far as to divine the ennobling power of love. The innocent creature had seen no reason for aspiring to a place which any other girl would have longed to attain; she had seen naught but obstacles in the way. Loving already, without knowing what it was to love, she found that she was far away from the source of her pleasure, and wished to move nearer to it, as a child longs for the golden grapes which are out of his reach. To a girl in whom the sight of a flower caused emotion, and who caught a glimpse of love in the music of the liturgy, how strong and sweet must the emotions of the night before have

been, at sight of the weakness of her lord, which encouraged her own weakness. But Etienne had grown during the night, she had made of him a hope, she had magnified him into a mighty power; she had raised him so high that she despaired of reaching his side.

"Will you allow me to come sometimes to see you in your domain?" said the duke, lowering his eyes.

When she saw Etienne so humble and fearful,—for he, in his turn, had deified Beauvouloir's daughter,—Gabrielle was embarrassed by the sceptre he placed in her hands; but she was deeply touched and flattered by his submissive demeanor. Women alone know the extent of the charm exerted by respectful treatment on their master's part. Nevertheless, she feared that she was mistaken, and, being as inquisitive as the first woman, she was determined to find out.

"Didn't you promise yesterday to teach me music?" she replied, hoping that the music would furnish an excuse for her to be with him.

If the poor child had only been acquainted with Etienne's life, she would not have thought of expressing a doubt. In his view, the spoken word was an echo of the mind, and that question caused him the deepest pain. He arrived with an overflowing heart, dreading the possibility of finding a dark spot in his light, and he was met by a doubt! His joy vanished, he plunged anew into his desert and failed to find there the flowers with which he had embellished it.

Enlightened by that foreknowledge of sorrows which distinguishes the angel whose mission it is to assuage them, and who, doubtless, is the charity of Heaven, Gabrielle divined the pain she had caused. She was so profoundly impressed by her error that she longed for the power of God that she might be able to lay bare her heart to Etienne; for she had known the cruel emotion caused by a reproach, by a stern glance; artlessly she showed him the clouds that had gathered in her heart, like golden swaddling-clothes, at the birth of her love. A tear in Gabrielle's eye changed Etienne's pain to pleasure, and thereupon he must needs accuse himself of tyranny. It was most fortunate that they became acquainted thus at the outset with the whole gamut of their hearts, for they avoided innumerable misunderstandings which would have tortured them. Suddenly, Etienne, impatient to intrench himself behind some occupation, led Gabrielle to a table in front of the little window where he had suffered so keenly, and where he was thenceforth to gaze in admiration at a lovelier flower than all those he had studied. Then he opened a book over which they bent their heads, so that their hair mingled.

These two beings, so strong in heart, so feeble in body, but embellished by the charms that suffering imparts, formed a touching picture. Gabrielle knew nothing of coquetry; a glance was granted as soon as it was solicited, and the soft beams that flashed from their eyes ceased to blend from modesty alone; it was a joy to her to tell Etienne what pleasure it

gave her to listen to his voice; she forgot the meaning of the words when he explained to her the position of the notes, or their value; she listened to him, neglecting the melody for the instrument, the idea for the form; an ingenious form of flattery, the first which true love encounters. Gabrielle thought Etienne beautiful; she would have liked to smooth the velvet of his cloak, to touch the lace of his collar. As for Etienne, he became transformed beneath the creative glance of those penetrating eyes; they infused into his veins a life-giving fluid which sparkled in his eyes, gleamed on his brow, recreated him inwardly; and he did not suffer by reason of this new activity of his faculties; on the contrary, they strengthened one another. Happiness was, as it were, the mother's milk of his new life.

As nothing could divest their minds from each other, they remained together, not that day alone, but all the days that followed, for they belonged to each other from the first day, passing the sceptre from one to the other, and playing together as the child plays with life. Sitting in perfect contentment on that golden sand, each told his story of the past: in the man's case, sorrowful, but full of dreams; in the woman's, dreamy, but full of painful pleasures.

"I never had a mother," said Gabrielle, "but my father has been as kind as God."

"I never had a father," rejoined the accursed child, "but my mother was a whole heaven to me."

Etienne told her of his youth, of his love for his mother, his taste for flowers. Gabrielle cried out

at that word. When he questioned her, she blushed, tried to avoid replying; then, when a shadow passed over that brow as if death had brushed it with its wing, over that visible heart on which Etienne's lightest emotions could be plainly read, she replied:

"Why, I love flowers, too."

Was it not such a suggestion as virgins love to make, the thought that they had been connected even in the past by similarity of tastes! Love always seeks to make itself appear old, it is the coquetry of children.

Etienne brought flowers to her the next day, having ordered that the choicest varieties should be gathered for her, as his mother had been wont to do for him. Who can say to how great a depth the roots of a sentiment extend in the breast of a recluse, when he thus continues the traditions of maternity, lavishing on a woman the caressing attentions by which his mother had embellished his life! Of how great importance to him were these trifles wherein the only two affections he had ever known were blended! Flowers and music became the language of their love. Gabrielle answered Etienne's messages with nosegays, those nosegays of which a single one had told the old bone-setter that his ignorant daughter already knew too much. The material ignorance of the two lovers formed a sort of dark background against which the slightest details of their wholly spiritual intimacy stood out with exquisite grace, like the exquisitely pure red profiles of Etruscan figures. Their most trivial words were followed

by oceans of ideas, for they were the fruit of their meditations. Incapable of conceiving a daring stroke, every beginning seemed to them an end. Although always free, they were imprisoned in an innocence which would have driven them to despair, if either of them had been able to give a meaning to his vague desires. They were poets and poetry at the same time. Music, the most sensuous of the arts to amorous natures, was the interpreter of their ideas, and they took pleasure in repeating the same phrase, pouring forth their passion in those beautiful waves of sound wherein their hearts beat in unison without hindrance.

Many love-affairs proceed by opposition: there are quarrels and reconciliations, the common conflict between mind and matter. But the first flapping of the wings of true love removes it instantly far from such conflicts, it no longer distinguishes two natures where the essence is the same; like genius in its noblest expression, it can hold its own in the brightest light, it endures the glare, thrives upon it, and has no need of darkness to set it off. Gabrielle, because she was a woman, Etienne, because he had suffered much and meditated much, speedily traversed the space which vulgar passions appropriate, and passed beyond. Like all feeble natures, they were more rapidly penetrated by faith, by that celestial purple which increases the strength by strengthening the soul. To them the sun was always in the zenith. Ere long, they acquired that divine faith in each other which suffers neither jealousy nor

unhappiness; they had self-sacrifice always ready, their mutual admiration was never-failing. Under these conditions, love was unattended by pain. Equal in their feebleness, strong by their union, if the nobleman possessed superior learning or conventional worldly grandeur, the physician's daughter effaced them by her beauty, her nobility of feeling, and by the refinement which she imparted to their pleasures.

Thus these two white doves suddenly find themselves flying side by side beneath a spotless sky: Etienne loves, he is loved, the present is serene, the future is without clouds, his will is law, the château is his, the sea belongs to both; no anxiety disturbs the harmonious strains of their joint song; virginity of the senses and of the mind magnifies the world in their eyes, their thoughts come without effort; desire, whose gratification pollutes so many things, desire, that blemish of earthly love, has not assailed them yet. Like two Zephyrs, seated on the same willow branch, they are happy to gaze at their reflections in the mirror-like surface of a limpid stream; immensity is enough for them, they admire the ocean, without wishing to glide over the waves in the white-sailed bark with flower-bedecked rigging, in which Hope stands at the helm.

There is a moment in love when it is sufficient unto itself, when it is happy to exist. During that springtime when everything is in the budding stage, the lover sometimes hides from his loved one, the better to see her and to enjoy her charms; but

Etienne and Gabrielle plunged together into the delights of that childlike hour: sometimes they were two sisters by virtue of the fascinating grace of their mutual confidences; sometimes two brothers by virtue of the audacity of their investigations. Ordinarily, love demands a slave and a god, but they realized Plato's delightful dream, they formed a single deified being. They protected each other in turn. Caresses came slowly, one by one, but as chaste as the frolicsome, merry, graceful sporting of young animals trying their strength. The sentiment which impelled them to pour forth their hearts in impassioned singing, led them toward love by the innumerable transformations of the same happiness. Their joys caused them neither delirium nor sleeplessness. It was the childhood of pleasure, always growing, but knowing naught of the lovely red flowers that will crown its stalk. They gave themselves to each other with no thought of danger, in a word or in a glance, in a kiss, or in the long pressure of their intertwined fingers. They praised each other's charms ingenuously, and expended in these secret idylls treasures of language, divining the sweetest exaggerations, the most extravagant terms of endearment invented by the ancient muse of the Tibulluses and their like, and repeated by the Italian poets. On their lips and in their hearts, there was the constant plashing of the foam-fringed waves on the fine sand of the beach, each similar yet each different. Joyous, everlasting fidelity!

If we must count the days, this period lasted five

months; if we must count the innumerable sensations, the thoughts, the dreams, the glances, the flowers that bloomed, the hopes realized, the joys without end, a head-dress removed and carefully torn to pieces, then reconstructed and adorned with flowers, conversations interrupted, resumed, abandoned, wild laughter, feet drenched in the sea, childish quests of shells hidden among the rocks, kisses, surprises, embraces—why, call it a whole lifetime, and death will justify the calculation. There are lives that are always gloomy, lived under gray skies; but imagine a lovely day when the sun illumines a pure blue atmosphere—such was the Maytime of their affection, during which Etienne hung all his past sorrows on Gabrielle's heart, while she had riveted her future joys to the heart of her lord. Etienne had had but one sorrow in his life, his mother's death; he was destined to have but one love, Gabrielle.

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The vulgar rivalry of an ambitious mortal hastened the course of this honey-sweet life. The Duc d'Hérouville, an old warrior accustomed to ruses, a rough but adroit politician, heard the voice of distrust in his breast after he had given the promise which his physician required. Baron d'Artagnon, the lieutenant of his free company, enjoyed his full confidence in political matters. The baron was a man after the duke's own heart, a sort of butcher, of powerful build, tall, with virile features, sharp of speech and cold-blooded, brave in the service of the throne, rough in his manners, endowed with a will of iron in the execution of orders, yet supple to the hand; of noble birth, moreover, and ambitious, with the bluff honesty of the soldier and the craft of the politician. He had the hand that his face indicated, the broad, hairy hand of the *condottiere*. His manners were brusque, his words few and to the point.

Now, the governor had instructed his lieutenant to keep close watch upon the physician's conduct toward the new heir-presumptive. Notwithstanding the care with which Gabrielle's presence at the château was concealed, it was no easy matter to deceive the lieutenant: he heard the singing of two voices, he saw lights in the evening in the house on the shore; he suspected that all Etienne's activity, the flowers he required, and the manifold orders he

gave, concerned a woman; then he came upon Gabrielle's nurse on the road to Forcalier, going thither for clothing or linen; and again bringing back an embroidery frame and other articles pertaining to a young woman. The trooper determined to see, and did see, the physician's daughter, and fell in love with her. Beauvouloir was rich. The duke would be furiously angry at the goodman's audacity. Upon these considerations Baron d'Artagnon based the edifice of his fortune. The duke, when he learned that his son was in love, would prefer to give him a wife belonging to some great family, with handsome estates in prospect; and to turn Etienne from his first love, nothing more would be necessary than to force Gabrielle to be false to him by marrying her to a noble whose estates were pledged to some Jew. The baron had no estates. These plans would have been most excellent with characters of the type we ordinarily meet in the world; but they were certain to fail with Etienne and Gabrielle. Chance, however, had served Baron d'Artagnon well.

During his sojourn in Paris, the duke had avenged Maximilien by killing his son's adversary, and he had planned for Etienne an alliance, of which he had hitherto entertained no hope, with the heiress of one branch of the family of Grandlieu, a tall, beautiful, disdainful person, who was pleased, however, by the hope of bearing some day the title of Duchesse d'Hérouville. The duke hoped to marry his son to Mademoiselle de Grandlieu. When he learned that Etienne was in love with the daughter of a wretched

physician, he determined to realize his hope. To his mind, the matter did not admit of argument. You know the brutal ideas upon the subject of love entertained by that man of brutal methods! he had allowed Etienne's mother to die before his eyes, without the slightest comprehension of her sighs.

Never, perhaps, in his life, had he been more furiously angry than he was when the baron's last despatch informed him with what rapidity the schemes of Beauvouloir, to whom the baron attributed the most impudent ambition, were progressing. The duke ordered his carriages and travelled from Paris to Rouen, escorting to his château the Comtesse de Grandlieu, her sister the Marquise de Noirmoutier, and Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, on the pretext of showing them the beauties of Normandie. A few days before his arrival, the all-engrossing subject of conversation, from Hérouville to Rouen, was the young Duc de Nivron's passion for Gabrielle Beauvouloir, the famous bone-setter's daughter, albeit no one knew how the rumor had spread. The good people of Rouen mentioned it to the old duke in the midst of the banquet which was offered him, for the guests were enchanted to stick pins into the despot of Normandie. This incident inflamed the governor's wrath to the last degree. He ordered that a letter be sent to the baron enjoining secrecy as to his intended visit to Hérouville and commanding him to guard against what he considered to be a misfortune.

Meanwhile, Etienne and Gabrielle had unwound all the thread from their spool in the vast labyrinth

of love, and both alike, having little desire to go forth, determined to live therein. One day they were standing by the window where so many things had happened. The hours, filled at first by sweet converse, now frequently flew by in meditative silence. They were beginning to feel within themselves the ill-defined longing for complete possession: they had reached the stage of confiding to each other their vague ideas, reflections of a lovely image in two pure hearts. During those still untroubled hours, Etienne's eyes sometimes filled with tears while he held Gabrielle's hand glued to his lips. Like his mother, but at this moment happier in his love than she had ever been, the accursed child gazed upon the sea, then tinged with gold where it broke on the shore, but black at the horizon, and cut here and there by the silver streaks which indicate a storm. Gabrielle, adapting herself to her friend's attitude, looked out in silence at the spectacle. A single glance, one of those by which hearts lean upon one another, was enough for them to communicate their thoughts. The last step was not a sacrifice for Gabrielle nor a demand for Etienne. Each of them loved with the love which is so divinely like unto itself at every instant of its eternity, that it knows nothing of sacrifice, that it fears neither disappointments nor delays. But Etienne and Gabrielle were absolutely ignorant of the pleasures of which their hearts felt the spur. When the fading twilight had drawn a veil over the sea, when the silence was broken only by the sobbing of the waves

as they advanced and receded on the beach, Etienne rose and Gabrielle did the same, with a vague dread, for he had released her hand. He put one arm about her, pressing her close to his side in a tender embrace; and she, understanding his wish, let him feel the weight of her body enough to assure him that she was his, but not enough to tire him. The lover laid his too heavy head upon his sweetheart's shoulder, his lips rested on her heaving bosom, his hair fell in profusion over Gabrielle's fair back and caressed her neck. The maiden, innocently amorous, bent her head in order to give Etienne more room, and put her arm about his neck as a support. They remained thus without speaking until it was quite dark. The crickets were singing in their holes, and the lovers listened to the music as if to occupy all their senses through a single one. Surely they could be compared only to an angel who stands with his feet resting on the earth, awaiting the hour to reascend to heaven. They had fulfilled the lovely dream of the mystic genius of Plato, and of all those who seek to give mankind a meaning; they made but a single soul, they were in very truth the mysterious pearl that is destined to adorn the brow of some unknown star, the hope of all of us!

"Will you take me home?" said Gabrielle, emerging first from that delicious calm.

"Why do we part?" Etienne replied.

"We ought to be together always," she said.

"Stay."

"Yes."

Old Beauvouloir's heavy step was heard in the adjoining room. He found the two children standing apart, and he had seen them in each other's arms at the window. Even the purest love loves mystery.

"This is not right, my child," he said to Gabrielle. "To stay here so late, without a light."

"Why?" she rejoined; "you know that we love each other, and he is master of the château."

"My children," said Beauvouloir, "if you love each other, your happiness demands that you should marry in order to pass your lives together; but your marriage depends upon monseigneur le duc's pleasure—"

"My father promised to accede to all my wishes," cried Etienne, eagerly, interrupting Beauvouloir.

"Then write to him, monseigneur," the physician replied, "tell him your wish, and give me your letter that I may put it with one I have just written. Bertrand will set out at once to deliver the letters to monseigneur himself. I have just learned that he is at Rouen; he has with him the heiress of the Grandlieu family, and I do not believe that it is on his own account— If I listened to my presentiments, I should take Gabrielle away this very night."

"Separate us!" cried Etienne, almost fainting with grief, and leaning on his sweetheart.

"Father!"

"Gabrielle," said the physician, handing her a smelling-bottle which he took from the table, and which she held to Etienne's nose,—"Gabrielle, my conscience tells me that nature intended you for each

other. But I wished to prepare monseigneur for a marriage which runs athwart all his ideas, and the evil one has warned him against us. He is Monseigneur le Duc de Nivron," said Gabrielle's father, "and you are a poor doctor's daughter."

"My father has sworn to cross me in nothing," said Etienne, calmly.

"He has also pledged his word to consent to whatever I might do in the way of finding a wife for you," said the physician, "but suppose he does not keep his promises?"

Etienne sank into a chair as if overwhelmed.

"The sea was dark to-night," he said, after a moment's silence.

"If you knew how to ride, monseigneur," said the physician, "I would bid you fly with Gabrielle this very night: I know you both, and I know that any other marriage would be disastrous to you. To be sure, the duke would have me cast into a dungeon, and would leave me there for the rest of my life, when he should learn of your flight; but I would gladly die if my death would assure your happiness. But, alas! to mount a horse would be to risk your life and Gabrielle's. We must brave the governor's wrath here."

"Here," repeated poor Etienne.

"We have been betrayed by someone at the château, who has aroused your father's anger," rejoined Beauvouloir.

"Let us go and throw ourselves into the sea together," Etienne whispered in Gabrielle's ear, as she knelt by his side.

She bowed her head with a smile. Beauvouloir divined everything.

"Monseigneur," he continued, "your learning, no less than your wit, has made you eloquent, love will surely make you irresistible: declare your love to monseigneur le duc; you will thereby confirm my letter, which is convincing enough. All is not lost, I believe. I love my daughter as dearly as you love her, and I propose to defend her."

Etienne shook his head.

"The sea was very dark to-night," he said.

"It was like a streak of gold at our feet," added Gabrielle, in a melodious voice.

Etienne called for lights, and seated himself at his table to write to his father. On one side of his chair was Gabrielle, kneeling, silent, looking at what he wrote without reading it, for she could read everything on Etienne's brow. On the other side stood old Beauvouloir, whose jovial face was profoundly sad, sad as that room in which Etienne's mother died. An inward voice said to the physician: "His mother's fate will be his!"

The letter finished, Etienne handed it to the old man, who hastened away to give it to Bertrand. The squire's horse was all saddled, the rider in readiness: he started and met the duke within four leagues of Hérouville.

"Go with me as far as the door of the tower," said Gabrielle to her lover when they were alone.

They passed through the cardinal's library and descended the stairs in the tower, to the door of

which Etienne had given Gabrielle the key. Benumbed by the dread of misery to come, the poor child left in the tower the torch he had used to light his beloved, and walked with her toward her house. A few steps from the little garden which formed a sort of courtyard of flowers to that humble dwelling, the lovers stopped. Emboldened by the vague fear which disturbed them, they exchanged, in the silence and darkness, that first kiss in which the material senses and the soul unite to cause a pleasure teeming with revelations. Etienne suddenly understood what love meant in its twofold expression, and Gabrielle fled, lest she should be led on by desire, but to what?—She had no idea.

As the Duc de Nivron was ascending the stairs after locking the door of the tower, a shriek of terror uttered by Gabrielle rang in his ears with the vividness of a flash of lightning which sears the eyes. He hurried through the great rooms to the main stairway, rushed down to the shore and to Gabrielle's house, where he saw a light.

As she entered the little garden, Gabrielle saw, by the light of the torch beside her nurse's spinning-wheel, a man seated in that goodwoman's chair in her stead. At the sound of footsteps, this man had risen and walked to meet her, and had frightened her. Baron d'Artagnon's aspect fully justified the fear he aroused in Gabrielle.

"You are the daughter of Beauvouloir, monseigneur's physician," said D'Artagnon, when Gabrielle had recovered from her fright.

"Yes, monseigneur."

"I have some things of the very greatest importance to disclose to you. I am Baron d'Artagnon, lieutenant of Monseigneur le Duc d'Hérouville's free company."

In view of the circumstances in which the lovers were placed, Gabrielle was struck by these words and by the tone in which the soldier uttered them.

"Your nurse is here, she may hear us; come with me," said the baron.

He left the house, followed by Gabrielle. They went to the beach behind the house.

"Have no fear," said the baron.

This remark would have given the alarm to a person who was not utterly ignorant; but a simple-hearted girl, who loves, never thinks herself in danger.

"My dear child," said the baron, striving to impart a honeyed tone to his voice, "you and your father are on the brink of an abyss into which you will surely fall to-morrow; I had not the heart, when I saw this, to refrain from warning you. Monseigneur is furiously angry with your father and with you, he suspects you of having seduced his son, and he prefers his son's death to his marriage to you: so much for his son. As for your father, this is what monseigneur proposes to do. Nine years ago your father was implicated in a criminal affair. It was a matter of kidnapping a child of noble birth at the time of the mother's confinement, for which your father was employed. Monseigneur, knowing that

he was innocent, protected him against the prosecution instituted by the parliament; but he intends to seize him now and turn him over to the law, with a demand that he be prosecuted. Your father will be broken on the wheel; but, in consideration of the services he has rendered his master, monseigneur will perhaps succeed in obtaining a commutation of the penalty to hanging. I do not know what he has decided with regard to you; but I know that you have it in your power to save Monseigneur de Nivron from his father's anger, to save Beauvouloir from the horrible punishment which awaits him, and to save yourself."

"What must I do?" said Gabrielle.

"Go and throw yourself at monseigneur's feet, confess that his son loves you against your will, and tell him that you do not love him. In proof of this, you must offer to marry the man whom it may please him to designate as your husband. He is generous, and will give you a handsome dowry."

"I can do everything except deny my love."

"But if it is necessary to do it, in order to save your father, Monseigneur de Nivron, and yourself?"

"It will kill Etienne," she said, "and me as well."

"Monseigneur de Nivron will be very sad at losing you, but he will live for the honor of his family; you will resign yourself to be the wife of a baron only, instead of a duchess, and your father will live," replied the man of action.

At this moment, Etienne reached the house, and, not seeing Gabrielle there, uttered a piercing cry.

"There he is!" cried the girl, "let me go and reassure him."

"I will come to-morrow morning to receive your answer," said the baron.

"I will consult my father," was her reply.

"You will not see him again! I have just received orders to arrest him and send him to Rouen, under escort and in chains," he said, leaving Gabrielle petrified with terror.

She returned to the house and found Etienne there, alarmed by the silence with which the nurse had answered his first question:

"Where is she?"

"Here I am!" cried the girl; her voice was hoarse, her color had disappeared, and her step was heavy.

"Where have you been?" he asked; "you shrieked."

"Yes, I ran against—"

"No, my love," said Etienne, interrupting her, "I heard a man's footsteps."

"Etienne, we have evidently offended God; let us kneel and pray. Then I will tell you everything."

Etienne and Gabrielle knelt at the prie-Dieu, while the nurse told her beads.

"O God," said the girl, in an outburst of exaltation which carried her beyond earthly boundaries, "if we have not sinned against Thy holy commandments, if we have offended neither the Church nor the king, we who form but a single person, in whom love glows like the light Thou hast given to the pearl

of the sea, grant that we be not parted in this world or in the other!"

"Dear mother," Etienne added, "who art in heaven, implore the Blessed Virgin that if Gabrielle and I may not be happy, we may at least die together, without suffering. Call us, and we will come to thee!"

Then, after they had repeated their evening prayers, Gabrielle described her interview with Baron d'Artagnon.

"Gabrielle," said the young man, taking courage from the very desperation of his love, "I shall have strength to resist my father."

He kissed her on the forehead, but not again on the lips; then he returned to the château, determined to defy the awe-inspiring man who weighed so heavily upon his life. He did not know that Gabrielle's house would be surrounded by soldiers as soon as he had left it.

The next day, Etienne was overwhelmed with grief when, on going to see Gabrielle, he found her a prisoner; but she sent her nurse to say to him that she would die rather than be false to him; furthermore, that she had found a way to elude the vigilance of her guards, and that she would take refuge in the cardinal's library, where no one could suspect that she was; but she did not know when she could carry out her plan. Etienne, therefore, remained in his room, where the forces of his heart wore themselves away in painful suspense.

At three o'clock, the carriages of the duke and his

suite entered the courtyard, where he proposed to sup with his visitors. And, just at nightfall, Madame la Comtesse de Grandlieu, leaning on her daughter's arm, Madame de Noirmoutier, and the duke ascended the grand staircase amid a profound silence, for their master's stern face had terrified all the retainers. Although Baron d'Artagnon had learned of Gabrielle's escape, he had asserted that she was under guard; but he trembled lest he should have endangered the success of his own private plan, in case the duke should find that his design was interfered with by her flight. Those two fear-inspiring faces wore a savage expression ill-disguised by the affable manner which the laws of courtesy obliged them to assume.

The duke had ordered his son to be in the salon. When the party entered, d'Artagnon knew from Etienne's downcast face that Gabrielle's escape was still unknown to him.

"This is my son," said the old duke, taking Etienne's hand and presenting him to the ladies.

Etienne saluted them without speaking. The countess and Mademoiselle de Grandlieu exchanged a glance which did not escape the old man.

"He will be a poor mate for your daughter," he said, in a low voice; "is not that your thought?"

"I think just the opposite, my dear duke," the mother replied, with a smile.

The Marquise de Noirmoutier laughed significantly. That laugh pierced Etienne's heart; he had already taken fright at sight of the tall young lady.

"Well, monsieur le duc," said his father, in an undertone and with a playful air, "have I not found you a beautiful mould? What do you say to this slip of a girl, my cherub?"

The old duke had not a doubt of his son's obedience, for to him Etienne was his mother's child, made of the same easily-worked clay.

"Let him have a child, and die!" thought the old man; "it makes little difference to me!"

"Father," said the young man, softly, "I do not understand you."

"Come to your room, I have a word to say to you," said the duke, leading the way to the state bedroom.

Etienne followed his father. The three ladies, impelled by a curiosity which Baron d'Artagnon shared, walked across the great salon, and stood in a group at the door of the state bedroom, which the duke had left ajar.

"Dear Benjamin," said the old man, softening his voice at the beginning, "I have chosen for your wife this beautiful and stately young lady; she is heir to the estates of a younger branch of the Grandlieu family, an honorable and venerable noble family of Bretagne. So, be a good fellow, and recall the prettiest things in your books, so that you can say pretty speeches to her before translating them by acts."

"Father, is it not a gentleman's first duty to keep his word?"

"Yes."

"Very well, when I forgave you for the death of my mother, who died in this room as the result of her marriage to you, did you not promise never to oppose my wishes? *I myself will obey you as the god of the family!* you said. I have no designs upon you, I ask only to be allowed to follow my own wishes in a matter in which my life is at stake, and which concerns me alone: my marriage."

"I understood," said the old man, conscious that all his blood was mounting to his cheeks, "that you would place no obstacles in the way of the perpetuation of our noble family."

"You made no conditions," said Etienne. "I know not what love has to do with perpetuation of a family; but I do know this—that I love the daughter of your old friend Beauvouloir, and the granddaughter of your friend the *Fair Roman.*"

"But she is dead!" replied the old colossus, with an air, at once sombre and mocking, which betrayed his purpose to cause her to disappear.

There was a moment of profound silence. The old man spied the three ladies and d'Artagnon at the door. At that supreme crisis, Etienne, whose sense of hearing was so extremely delicate, heard poor Gabrielle in the library, where, wishing to let her lover know that she was concealed there, she sang these words:

"The ermine
Less glossy is,
The lily less white than thee."

The accursed child, whom his father's terrible words had plunged into the abyss of death, returned to the surface of life on the wings of those verses. Although that spasm of terror, swiftly as it had been effaced, had broken his heart, he summoned all his strength, raised his head, looked his father in the face for the first time in his life, returned scorn for scorn, and said, with the emphasis of hatred:

"A gentleman should never lie!"

Then, with one bound, he was at the door opposite that of the salon.

"Gabrielle!" he cried.

The lovely creature suddenly appeared in the shadow, like a lily among its leaves, and trembled before that group of sneering women, who were now informed of Etienne's love. Like the clouds which bring the thunder, the old duke, who had reached a degree of frenzy which cannot be described, stood out against the gorgeous background formed by the rich dresses of the three ladies of the court. Any other man would have hesitated between the perpetuation of his race and a mésalliance; but in that indomitable old man there was still a large admixture of the ferocity which had solved all human difficulties; he drew his sword on all occasions as the sole means within his knowledge of dealing with the Gordian knots of life. At this juncture, when the overturning of his plans had reached its climax, nature was sure to triumph. Twice caught in the very act of lying by a creature whom he detested, by the child whom he had cursed a thousand times, and

whom he cursed more heartily than ever at the moment when his despised and, in his eyes, most despicable weakness triumphed over an omnipotence hitherto infallible, there was nothing left in him of the man or the father: the tiger came forth from the lair in which he was hiding. The old man, rejuvenated by the thirst for vengeance, bestowed upon the most ravishingly beautiful pair of angels who ever vouchsafed to rest their feet on earth a glance heavy with hatred, a murderous glance.

"Very good; die, both of you!—You, vile abortion, the living proof of my shame!—You," he said to Gabrielle, "wretched strumpet with the viper's tongue, who have poisoned my family!"

These words discharged into the hearts of the two children the terror with which they were laden. As Etienne saw his father's great hand, armed with a sword, raised over Gabrielle's head, he died, and Gabrielle fell dead while trying to retain him.

The old man, frantic with rage, closed the door, and said to Mademoiselle de Grandlieu:

"I will marry you myself!"

"And you are lusty enough to raise a fine brood," said the countess, in the ear of the old man, who had served under seven kings of France.

Paris, 1831–1836.

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